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WHERE THE SUN SETS

WHERE THE SUN SETS

MEMORIES

FROM OTHER YEARS AND LANDS

BY

FRANCIS SINCLAIR

AUTHOR OF "BALLADS AND POEMS FROM THE PACIFIC,"
"SKETCHES BY AOPOURI," ETC.

4 3 5-1

They ope no door, no quick or heavy tread
Crosses my threshold with a rude foot-fall;
But with the grace and reverence of the dead,
They enter softly all.

Enter and take their places by my chair;
Enter and touch me with their shadowy hands;
Bringing the light and darkness, joy and care,
From other years and lands.

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PREFACE

I BELONG to a Coterie of Wanderers who make it a point to foregather in London during the month of May—that is, as many as happen to be in England at that festive season. All our Associates have travelled far and wide, one of our rules being that before a candidate is eligible for election he must have spent at least a fifth part of his life abroad, the farther afield the better.

At our reunions members are expected to recount any striking adventures in which they have taken part, the only conditions being that a contribution is edifying as well as entertaining, and that in its main points it must be true. Of course, it is always allowable to intensify a

subject a little—as a painter lightens or darkens his colours without in the least changing the truth of the scene he portrays.

A short while ago one of our most experienced Associates related the adventure which I have placed at the beginning of my collection. The stories which follow were contributed at various meetings, and are now for the first time transcribed from my notebooks where I jotted down the incidents shortly after they occurred, or came to my knowledge, and while they were still fresh in my mind.

F. S.

London, 1905.

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WHERE THE SUN SETS

A MEMORY OF THE PACIFIC

WHERE THE SUN SETS

A MEMORY OF THE PACIFIC

THE beautiful Pacific, its blue waters decked with innumerable fairy islands, is the most romantic, as well as the greatest, ocean in the world. Ever since gallant Balboa, nearly four hundred years ago, first discovered this vast sea, and, rushing into its waters with sword and buckler, took possession of it in the name of his master, Ferdinand of Spain; ever since, a few years later, brave old Magellan first launched the ships of Europe on the unknown sea, and boldly crossed its uncharted, unexplored bosom, and appropriately named it the "Pacific," it has been an El Dorado to all the adventurous spirits of the world. Even in its names it has been more fortunate than most parts of the

globe; *Pacific* has a pleasing air about it, both in sound and meaning; *Polynesia*, signifying *many islands*, is not only appropriate, but is a nice word in one's mouth. As for native names of places and things, there is not a jaw-breaking word in their whole vocabulary.

Then, the charms of its halcyon climate—its coral atolls, with raging, snow-white surf on one side, and pellucid, glittering lagoons on the other! hundreds of splendid volcanic islands of unsurpassed fertility, clothed with the most gorgeous vegetation in the world, and, withal, a people, genial, merry, and handsome; having just enough fierceness in their composition (like their own ocean's rare but deadly hurricanes) to make their companionship exhilarating and interesting! All this, and much more, which is too subtile for commonplace words to express, make the Pacific a dream of romance to those who have only read of it, and a memory which never fades to those who have drifted from island to island on its azure bosom by day, and its moonlit waters by night.

* * * * *

I know the Pacific as well as most men. From Tahiti westward to Fiji, and from Tonga

northward to Hawaii, I don't suppose there are many who have seen more of the native races, or who sympathize with and understand them better than I do. Of course when I say "understand them," I speak as a white man, and by that I mean that a white man never quite understands what we rather superciliously call "coloured people." White people express themselves quite freely, too freely I fear, on all manner of subjects, sacred and profane. Not so the brown races. They only *seem* to us to do so. There are certain subjects and thoughts which they never discuss. The brown man knows, by some fine, subtile sense, exactly what his friend or foe is thinking and feeling, so there is no need for expression in words. All primitive races have this intuitive instinct in common with the higher animal kingdom, which we seem to have lost, that is to say if we ever possessed it.

There are, or rather *were*, for "the old order changeth, yielding place to new," three distinct classes of "whites" in the many scattered islands of the Pacific, and I have been brought into contact and studied them all pretty closely. Firstly, there are the missionaries; secondly, "lost" gentlemen, who cannot quite hide their

origin, even with bare feet, flannel shirt, and moleskin trousers; and, thirdly, the true beach-comber, a class, as a rule, lazy, dirty, and altogether worthless. These are—or were—the three types, but of course there are many exceptions in each class. Still the old saying holds good here as elsewhere, that "exceptions only prove the rule."

The old missionaries as a class are (or were when I knew them) a self-sacrificing and noble body of men and women; although sometimes I have noticed enough of bigotry and lack of true charity among them to show clearly that they are lineal descendants of the old Adam, as indeed we all are, for that matter.

The "lost" gentlemen are a happy-go-lucky lot, who generally have missed their way through drink, or otherwise kicking over the traces of civilized society; or else through lack of moral fibre have drifted out of their sphere and become so overwhelmed with the glamour of the coral seas, palm groves, and the witchery of siren voices, that they have sat them down upon the yellow sands and sang, "We will return no more! no more!" The beach-combers are, as a rule, an utterly worthless set of men, vicious and lazy, who subsist upon the good

nature and kindly feelings of the natives, whom they vilify as well as plunder. As I previously remarked, none of these three classes (or any other class for that matter) clearly understands the natives. The "lost" gentleman class come nearest, no doubt, to reading the secret of the islander's character. The beach-comber is too dense and gross to understand the subtle shades of feeling in the sensitive hearts of these children of nature. As for the missionary, good man, it is the constant aim and object of the Pacific islanders—without exception—to hide their real feelings from him. Not only because the poor, simple brown man knows that if he revealed himself unreservedly the missionary would stand shocked and aghast (and he hates to give needless pain); but also the coloured human being has a deep-rooted idea away down in his poor, warped soul, that with regard to all religious matters, a certain amount of what I must call hypocrisy for want of a more suitable word, is not only allowable, but laudable. As if their virtuous deportment for the time being atoned for a multitude of sins at odd times.

Mind you, I do not for one moment mean to

infer that there are no truly religious natives in the Pacific. On the contrary, I am proud to say that I have had the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with many, both men and women, some of whom have passed, and others who will yet pass, into the kingdom of heaven. But what I do mean to say is, that if these people had unreservedly shown their inward souls and daily lives to any conscientious missionary he would have given up the Pacific in despair. And that would have been a pity, for the missionary has done more good than he is credited with, after all is said and done, even if he has been occasionally rather narrow and self-opinionated. But we must remember that we all have more or less of these disagreeable qualities; and so we should not be too hard on the poor missionary, even if he is a trifle exasperating now and then.

One point more, and then I shall take leave of my friend the missionary; and I must say that I do so with profound and sincere sympathy for his lonely, monotonous life in the Pacific Islands. All the sounds and sights of his youth thousands of leagues away, over dreary wastes of ocean; no changes of season to let him know when the hawthorn is white

in the spring hedges, or when the blackberries are ripe in the autumn; no more rustling of the leaves as in the times when he and his companions went nutting in the long, glorious afternoons; no crystal streams with dark pools under the ferny bank where the sly, lovely trout hide away, and now and then make a ripple on top of the water to everybody's intense excitement; no music of thrush or blackbird in the early morning; no cheerful sound of ploughmen speaking to their horses, and boys and girls laughing and calling as they bring the cows up to the milking. No! no! never again such sounds. Only the ceaseless monotone of the vast Pacific rollers booming on the coral reef, and the moaning of the trade winds in the cocoa-nut groves—only these from year's end to year's end!

Ah! my thoughtless tourist friend who flutters through the Pacific by the easy route of luxurious steamers and then writes a book, incidentally mentioning—among other misstatements—the easy, arcadian life of the missionary, all "apple pie and cream," on the sandy beach under the cocoa-nut palms—ah! my friend, did you never hear that "fools rush in where Angels fear to tread"? If you had seen

as much of the lonely tragedy of missionary life as I have, you would not smile, but weep at that true story of the poor missionary lady, who, after thirty or forty years of the monotony of her life, even with regard to food (long restricted to tasteless fish and too *tasteful* pork), at last wept bitter tears when she found that she had *lost* the taste for roast beef! Put that in your pipe and ponder, my luxurious globe trotter, retailing in your club your broad, silly stories of missionary life, and other things in the Pacific—of which you really know much less than if you had stayed at home and read "Captain Cook's Voyages," "The Life of Chalmers," and such like books.

The point I referred to a little while ago is this. The missionary, as a general thing forgot, or rather never learned, "That it takes forty generations to make the wild duck tame." He was too hasty with his so-called "civilization." (Mark that I do not say Christianity—*that* can never be inculcated too early). But he was too hasty with his so-called "civilization" for "the wild brown man." And the end of it all is that the poor fellows have come out of the process (the few that are left) neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red herring. All their old customs

(unless such as were grossly inconsistent with Christianity, which many of them were not) should have been left untouched, and, in short, the old natural life retained as far as possible. Their customs were suited to their race, to their climate, and to their islands.

There are many things which cannot be eradicated from the native mind, except, perhaps, by generations of education, as they have been slowly, and shall I say *partially*, eradicated from ours. One of these is the belief in the power of certain men of their race to cause death by magic arts. The native may joke with you on the subject, he may avow utter unbelief in any such power, he may even scoff openly before a *Kahuna* (priest) of the magic art; but I venture to affirm that there is not a native or even half-caste in the Pacific, with any amount of the veneer of civilization, education, and religion to fortify him, but would calmly and hopelessly lay himself down and die if he knew, and, strange to say, *often when he does not know*, that a real, good, old-fashioned *Kahuna* had taken in hand to pray him to death. Of course, there are a clumsy lot who use what we may call foul means, *poison*, for instance, but that is not the method of the true, old, respect-

able *Kahuna Anaana*,[1] whose method is magic, pure and simple.

A very curious part of the magic is that he who *apparently* has the power of death in his inscrutable heart, has also to some extent the power of life. I remember witnessing a striking instance of this in Hawaii. I visited that very interesting island a good many years ago, when the Hawaiian Archipelago were still under the benign government of their native kings; ere a congregation of lawyers and other malcontents subverted one of the most unique, contented, and happy little governments in the world, and then induced "Uncle Sam" to gobble up the islands, stock, lock, and barrel, without even the common decency of saying to the poor, meek islanders, "By your leave!"

I was located for the time being with a

[1] *Kahuna Anaana*, pronounced Ka-hu-na Ah-nah-nah. *Kahuna* means priest; *Anaana* means witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, etc., but to the native mind Anaana conveys a much more subtile, or perhaps I should say a more substantial meaning than these words do to us. It is as tangible to the Pacific islander as life or death. It is to him one of the inscrutable facts which exist whether one likes it or not. The wise man is he who endeavours to keep clear of its dangers, and to reap its benefits without raising foolish and profitless questions which simply cannot be solved.

University man, an ex-Army officer, who had somehow or other kicked over the traces, and gone drifting. After many adventures (among others the Maori war in New Zealand, and gum digging afterwards) he had drifted north into the vast Pacific and got lost, as many have done before and since. Fortunately for him he had been born with a good deal of energy (no training can impart this priceless quality, it must be "bred in the bone"), which saved him from becoming the hopeless loafer one meets so often in those sunny seas.

My friend had acquired a good deal of property, kept a store with the usual native trade, had regular meals (instead of falling into the shiftless, slovenly way of the lost white of eating, smoking, and drinking whenever there is a chance), and altogether lived a sort of civilized life. He had married a half-caste girl, who had been brought up by an English lady, and was really well-mannered and intelligent. She was musical; could play the usual popular society pieces with much verve on an old piano which my friend had traded from a Yankee whaling skipper who was bound home with a full ship, and whose wife, in the glory of wealth, had made up her mind to have a bran new Steinway.

She could paint, too, quite prettily (from copy) and was, in short, what a man would call a lady, if he met her in any drawing-room. What a woman would have called her, I do not exactly know. Women are much more observant than men, and they often take dislikes where a man sees no reason.

I had better mention the up-bringing this girl had had, to show you that her mind was considerably removed from the ordinary way of thinking of her class in the Pacific. Mrs. Willoby, or rather Julia, as everybody, native fashion, called her, was the daughter of a well-to-do sea captain who commanded a sailing ship, which in years gone by had traded between San Francisco, Oregon, Hawaii, and Sydney. During one of his calls at Kealakeakua Bay, the captain saw, loved, and in haste married, a pretty native girl. History does not say whether he performed the usual repenting "at leisure." Anyhow, he seems to have behaved extremely well. His wife lived contentedly and happily in a nice house he built for her. When she died after some ten years of married life, the captain took his little daughter to San Francisco and left her in charge of an old maiden sister, the only relative, he thought, who would tolerate

the wild ways, yet warm heart, of the little brown waif. The captain was quite right in his choice of a guardian for Julia. The shrivelled heart of the old maid went out at once to the loving little creature who had come to waken memories she had long thought dead and buried in the land of youth and dreams. So everything seemed as it should be. But, alas, after a few years the tropical flower began to fade. What the Californians called "Trade winds" were not *her* trade winds, and little Julia was withering under their chill blast. Then the captain, in dire alarm, having a charter for Sydney, packed his sister and daughter into the snug cabin of the "Flying Spray," determined to try the regions under the Southern Cross, for his "wee tropic bird," as he lovingly called his little girl.

Julia prospered and had many advantages of education in Sydney. But when she got to be fifteen or sixteen years of age, she began to wilt under the cold sweep of the "sou'-westers" and the doctors advised her father to take his "wee tropic bird" back to her native clime. So back they came to the little house in Kealakeakua, where some years later the sweet old aunt fell asleep under the cocoa-nut trees,

and Julia met her happy fate in the tall, handsome ex-Guardsman.

* * * * *

I spent a very pleasant month or two with my friend Willoby, which, by the way, was not his real name. He lived on the south-west side of Hawaii, about a thousand feet above the sea. His location was in the midst of fine woods where one could wander at will, shooting, or plant collecting, or simply loafing with a book; this all before the splendid forest was ruined by lantana (a gift of the white man, with many other wretched gifts, as my friend used to remark). Strange to say, this is the only spot in the Pacific where I have ever met our old friend the crow, and, stranger still, the birds only inhabit a district of a few miles in extent. It is marvellous, if they are indigenous, that they have not spread all over the islands; and if they have been introduced, it is still more marvellous that the observant native has no record of the event. I have met many intelligent white men, born in the country, who thought I was drawing the long bow when I told them that I had shot crows in Kona, Hawaii.

* * * * *

I had just completed a long tour round the island; visited the great volcano of Kilauea, made the ascent of Mauna-loa, finally again reaching Willoby's ranch from the northward, which I had left, riding due south, six weeks before. As I rode into the yard I was struck by the absence of the usual hilarious—not to say noisy—demonstrations of welcome with which I had always been received hitherto. Not even a dog gave tongue, which is always a cheering sound in lonely places, as Byron, with his subtile knowledge of human nature, so beautifully says:

> "'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
> Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home."

I threw my horse's bridle to one of the numerous "yard boys" who are always in great abundance about all substantial establishments in the islands, stepped unceremoniously on to the veranda, and proceeded at once to unbuckle my spurs and leggings. The solemn expression on the boy's face as he took my horse, and the unusual quiet about the place, coupled with the absence of my friend, were beginning to make me a little uneasy, when, to my relief, Willoby himself appeared, and greeted me in his accus-

tomed kind way, but with a very sad and anxious expression on his usually cheerful face. After ascertaining that I had replenished the inner man at a native house only two hours previously, he had me into a little room at the end of the veranda, a snug little retreat which he called his den, and which was understood to be absolutely sacred from all intrusion. From the windows one had a wonderful view of the cool, splendid forest. A couple of miles or so down, began the lava desolation which stretched away to the line of cocoanut trees fringing the long line of the great Pacific rollers, whose sad, slumberous monotone rose and fell on the soft sea breeze. Beyond the breakers lay the calm Pacific, glittering like a sea of glass, without a ripple, for days together. Here, sometimes, a schooner will lie becalmed, utterly helpless, her white sails hanging limp and useless from the gently swaying gaffs. In the Pacific an island as high as Hawaii makes a complete barrier to the trade winds. Schooners may be plunging bows under, and with sails close-reefed, on the windward side of a large island, while others are lying becalmed on the lee side, the sailors vainly whistling for a breeze to carry them past the calm streak.

A curious part of it all is that the tremendous rollers, thundering on the reef, have nothing to do with storms in the Pacific. They are messengers from wild typhoons that are exhausting their wrath in the far-off China Sea. I have seen a most accurate computation of the time it takes these great rollers to cross the Pacific (I forget, at the moment, how many hours from Hawaii to the coast of California), but their speed is almost incredible when one watches their apparently slow, measured beating on the reef.

When Willoby had motioned me to a seat and produced the *regrettable* hospitality of Englishmen all over the world, a bottle of "Mountain Dew," he lit his pipe (another unfortunate English habit), sat down facing me, and began to smoke vigorously, a way he had when in any unusual perplexity. This man and I had only foregathered three months before, but, somehow, it seemed as if we had been intimate friends all our lives. That sort of thing happens sometimes, not often, when two Britishers meet in lonely out-of-the-way corners of the globe.

My friend had told me the story of his wayward career, from his father's quiet manor

house in far-off Cornwall, with its calm and refined surroundings, to the native establishment in South Kona, Hawaii, with *its* surroundings, and I had come deeply to sympathize with the "lost" gentleman, after, of course, being violently angry with him for the many golden opportunities he had lightly cast away, and the many hearts he had broken.

After an interval of smoke and silence, Willoby said, "No doubt you have noticed the difference between your departure and your return? Native fun, noise, and good wishes then; fear, gloom, and sadness now! It is this —my wife is dying—she is only a half-caste girl, as you know, but she is about as good as they make 'em, as the saying goes; and above all, she is the only one I have left in the world to care for me now, and the only one I care for. When she dies, the whisky and the revolver route is all that is left for me!" The poor fellow's face and voice showed that he was perfectly sober and in deadly earnest.

With the natural impulse we all have of trying to comfort one in distress, I said that I hoped it was only some temporary illness that his wife was suffering from. I felt sure that one who was in such brilliant health as she was when

I left could not be so very low now. Willoby shook his head. "Come and see her," he said, impulsively, leading me to the back of the house, where the family quarters were. He entered the room first, and in a few moments beckoned me to come, saying in as cheery a voice as he could assume, poor fellow, "Our friend has come back from Hilo, Julia! and he is going to cheer you up and make you well of that miserable weakness you have, my girl!" Mrs. Willoby and I had always got on well, and I think she was now really glad to see me. But I was utterly dumbfounded and shocked to see the sad change in the poor young thing. Sunken cheeks, fallen chest, laboured breathing, and above all, that pleading expression in the eyes which tells plainer than words that they see the grim enemy approaching. All told without a shadow of doubt that little Julia's days, or rather hours, were numbered. It was extremely touching, and I felt profound sympathy for Willoby in his desolation. As for the girl, I felt deeply too for her, but I knew that she was not suffering mentally, as her husband was, and as for the physical suffering, that could and was being relieved by medical skill.

There was an old French doctor in the dis-

trict, appointed by the government. He was now in the house, and was attending Mrs. Willoby assiduously night and day. But, as the old savant admitted, this was a case which baffled all the knowledge gained in half a dozen of the most famous colleges in the world. Doctor de Voe was a very clever and learned old chap. He had drifted into the eddies of life (but that is another story which I could tell you something of too; this is Willoby's story I am at now so I must try to stick to it) and at last deserted from a French whale ship in Kealakeakua Bay, bewitched, as he told me himself, by the bright eyes of a daughter of a greatly celebrated *Kahuna Anaana* (Priest of Magic).

It was a high offence to practise magic, but who was going to be public-spirited enough to prosecute the old magician at the imminent risk of his own life? So Holokahiki, in a little devil's den of his own, with one old weird wife (he had owned ten in his younger days) lived on the fat of the land, the surreptitious reward of his magic arts. Madly jealous husbands came to him to find out the cause of a wife's alienated affections. Love-sick swains sought his aid not only to cure their own broken hearts, but also to bring some obdurate fair one under the spell

of the little mischievous god, which last was an easy enough task for old Holokahiki. It meant simply the proper placing of a love-philtre above some doorway, or on some tree, under which the coy maiden would pass, and the deed was done. More serious still was the case of those who for any cause allowing their hate to blind their reason engaged the old magician to pray the object of their hatred to death. Such was the father of the handsome girl with the unfathomable eyes, who had lured the learned member of a dozen medical societies, to cut the painter with civilization. There were, of course, several temptations hard for the poor Doctor to resist—the love of a really handsome woman, a fair income (eight hundred dollars from the government, and about as much more from outside practice), a really comfortable grass-house, all the magazines and books he wished to order from Honolulu, and last, but by no means least, an excellent Chinese cook. Of course I could put down a good deal *per contra*, but I refrain, and proceed with my disjointed yarn.

After a few words of kindly greeting with poor Julia, Willoby and I returned to his den, and sat down with never a word. There was

no use attempting to disguise the fact that the poor girl was nearing her end. Willoby knew exactly all I could say to console him under the heavy affliction which was so surely overtaking him. And it was out of the question to say that I had any hope of his wife's recovery; he would have known that was the thinnest kind of a lie. While we sat thus, Willoby smoking in moody silence, Doctor de Voe joined us. There was a queer look on his expressive, brown, bilious face. Without a word he helped himself to a stiff nip of whisky, drank it off neat (as all people do excepting Englishmen), and swallowed half a glass of water immediately afterwards.

Then he sat down and looked across the table at Willoby, with a strange gleam in his eyes—a gleam both tragic and comic—which produced a most weird expression in those deep sunken, fiery orbs. "Mr. Willoby," he said (the Doctor could speak English perfectly), "Mr. Willoby! your wife will not live at the most four days, unless—unless!" Here the Doctor paused, and poor Willoby stared at him with a hard, drawn face, and said in a voice quite unlike his own, "Unless what? What do you mean? Is it money you want, you French

devil?" The Doctor had the reputation of making extortionate charges, and letting his patients slip if money was not promptly forthcoming. I felt awfully startled at Willoby's fierce expression, fearing that he had only hastened his wife's death by making it impossible for the Doctor to remain in the house. But to my dazed astonishment the fiery little Frenchmen looked quite compassionately at Willoby, and nodded most emphatically, saying, "Yes! that is exactly what I do want—money—and a good deal of it too! for it will be a most expensive, and, what is more, a dangerous *operation*." I fully expected that Willoby would strike the Doctor, such a wild look of passion came over his face. We all rose, and, with the table between, stood looking at each other without a word or a sound, save Willoby's heavy breathing, for the space of time in which one might slowly count five. Then the Doctor, still compassionately regarding Willoby, coolly poured out a quarter of a tumbler of whisky, filled it to the brim with water, handed it to him, saying, "Drink this, keep quite calm, and listen to me, and I think I can reveal a way to save your wife. Lose your self-control, pitch me over the veranda, kill somebody else, and

your wife dies as sure as the sun rises to-morrow morning."

The Doctor spoke and acted in such a strange, authoritative manner that Willoby obediently drank the whisky and sat down. I learned afterwards that the poor fellow had not touched food or drink for two days, and the Doctor knew it. Stepping into the next room—he had known the run of the house for years—he returned in a moment with a tin of biscuits and some cheese, and put them on the table, saying, "Eat, my friend, it is for your wife's sake I am now working, not for yours at all." Poor Willoby began upon the food like a corrected child, staring at the Doctor, with never a word. There ensued a few minutes of silence, while the Doctor watched Willoby eating; then, apparently satisfied on that point, he said, "You know that my wife is the daughter of Holokahiki, a colleague of mine, and, I am sorry to admit, a much more learned medico than myself. I, and all of my school, can only make mild experiments with a patient, sometimes retarding Nature when that wise power is curing in its own wonderful way, and sometimes hastening death in our vain attempts to block Nature's immutable laws. My respected father-in-law

commits no such errors, simply because he tries no experiments, having discovered (what we have not) the unchangeable laws of Nature. I am a little prolix, my dear Willoby, because I wish to impress upon you that nothing must be done in haste, and least of all in passion. My medical acumen is utterly at fault. Your wife is—as far as medical skill can diagnose the case—absolutely in good health. All the organs from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot are in perfect condition, yet she will die within a week if Holokahiki does not take the case in hand *for a cure*."

"What do you mean? you cold-blooded devil of a French charlatan!" cried poor Willoby, his eyes blazing, and the great drops of anguish standing on his forehead.

I felt sure the Doctor would strike him, or coolly leave the house. But I did not fully appreciate the good stuff the little Frenchman was made of. He never turned a hair; on the contrary he quietly laid his hand on Willoby's arm, saying, "I thought I could depend upon you, but I fear I am mistaken. If you say go, I shall go, and do all in my power with the aid of narcotics to soothe your wife's last moments; but save her I cannot. Nor can any

one on earth save her, excepting my learned colleague, Holokahiki! And to get him *to cure* the case will require the most delicate diplomacy and finesse. The slightest roughness or tactless handling will ruin everything."

Here the Doctor paused, rolled a little cigarette, took half a dozen draws, inhaling the last, then slowly letting the smoke escape from the nose as he threw away the bit of the unconsumed tobacco. "Bad habit," said the Doctor; "picked it up, with other bad things, in South America. Inhaling takes, on an average, about ten years off a man's life." Turning to Willoby, he continued: "You have been in the islands longer than I; but I think that I may say without offence to your erudition, my dear Willoby, that you do not understand, or rather that you have not begun even dimly to perceive the strangely complex mind of the native. I have! only dimly, I admit. But I have got the length of knowing how not to 'Rush in where angels fear to tread.' And I have also learned, in the course of a not uneventful life, that it is not wise to pretend to know what we really do not understand. We, with our centuries of training, and different origin (for no doubt the Pacific islander is a pre-Adamite), are totally apart from him

in mind and thought (feelings are another subject altogether, all mankind share affection, hate, fear, joy, etc., etc., with the whole animal kingdom). When I say *mind*, I mean that fine, subtile *something* which separates the *genus homo* from all other living creatures. Very well, you must bear with me for being apparently unfeeling at this critical moment, but I really am not so. It is only that the white man is always verbose, where the *near-to-Nature* brown man would convey his meaning quite clearly without articulate words at all. Oh, that I had my brown brother's gift of that *something* which can convey meaning without the use of our cumbersome words. But I have nearly done. What I wish to say is this, that if you allow me *carte blanche* over, say, two thousand dollars in gold coin (gold has worked wonders, good and bad, before now), and leave me to manage without a single inquiry or comment of any kind, and with only your friend here as a witness for my good faith, I feel fairly certain that I can find means to save your wife."

When the Doctor ceased speaking Willoby did not utter a word. Slowly and calmly he finished his glass, then rose and went into

the other room. I heard him open and shut a trunk, and, coming back, he laid a fat canvas cash bag on the table and nodded at the Doctor, who at once proceeded to count the money. He piled the handsome twenty-dollar pieces (the money was all in twenties) in fives, a glittering array of twenty piles of five each. "Bon!" said the Doctor. "Now to business. You will not see me for three days—unless your wife becomes much worse—in which case send for me. In the meantime give her the soothing mixture. And as for yourself, you must give me your solemn promise not to leave your house until I return."

This poor Willoby meekly did, the Doctor's cheerful, brisk manner seeming to give the sorrow-stricken man some sort of—if not hope—at least comfort. The Doctor shook Willoby by the hand, I did the same, and without another word we departed, taking the bag of gold with us. We went straight to the Doctor's house, and while we partook of a slight noon repast, the Doctor sketched out his plan of action, at the same time giving me a short synopsis of the character of old Holokahiki. The Doctor had lived for many years on familiar, friendly terms with the old

wizard, and knew about his practices; that is, as far as a white man could know such things. In whatever way the power was acquired, whether learned by patient study of Nature, a gift by diabolical agency, or inherited, there was no doubt, in the Doctor's opinion, that there did exist some strange, potent, occult power in the hands of old Holokahiki, and all his cult. Moreover, after much study of the subject, he had come to the conclusion that the power, whatever it might be, was unattainable by our race. We had got too far away from the heart of nature to be able to perceive the subtile influences which touch our spiritual and bodily life.

The Doctor and his "respected" father-in-law (as he called the old wizard) lived on perfectly good terms, each content to let the other practise his own profession, so long as there was no friction or interference. The Doctor told me that for the sake of his own peace of mind he had for some years ceased to study the old magician's art; and it was only through sympathy with Willoby, and the mysterious illness of his wife, that, after much cogitation he had become suspicious that it was a case of Anaana. This suspicion was confirmed after

much cautious and loving converse with his own wife. She also told him a circumstance which the Doctor had never heard viz., that there had been a sort of flirtation between Willoby and a certain village belle before the pretty half-caste came upon the scene and carried him off in great triumph. All this the Doctor learned from his wife under the most profound pledges of secrecy; and further, that the dutiful daughter suspected that her beloved father had been *professionally retained* by the slighted fair one, to *remove* her successful rival, and so leave the course clear for another attempt upon the heart of the wealthy, handsome white man.

The Doctor's plan was simplicity itself. He would boldly interview Holokahiki, and try the power of gold to effect a cure on poor Mrs. Willoby; a sort of out-bidding of the rival's case. The Doctor concealed five hundred dollars of the gold about his person, and, putting the balance in the safe, we started for the lonely, isolated abode of "my learned colleague," as the Doctor liked to call him. The old wizard's hut was on the outskirts of the village, on a spot commanding a splendid view, and at the same time so situated that visitors could not approach

unperceived. We found the old man reclining on a mat, under the shade of a kukui tree, which partly overshadowed his house, and afforded a most grateful shade from the fierce midday sun. The Doctor cordially greeted his father-in-law, and then introduced me as "He Haole maikai! Aole wahahee, aole hoopunipuni" (a good foreigner, who did not tell lies, nor deceive). This favourable description was, of course, to put the old man at his ease in the negotiation which was to follow.

I was much impressed with the Kahuna's general appearance and bearing. He was evidently very old (between ninety and a hundred, the Doctor told me), yet as straight and lithe as a man only half his age. He had the peculiar grace and ease of bearing which was a natural possession of all Pacific islanders ere they were spoiled and made awkward by foreign manners and clothing. Over his shoulders he wore a gaily-coloured piece of kapa (native cloth), which only partially concealed his striking figure. He was fully six feet in height, and without a particle of surplus flesh on his splendidly preserved body. He had very few wrinkles on his face—he was too clean cut for wrinkles—and his eyes were clear and deep, like water in a

shadowy mountain pool. An abundant crop of stiff, gray hair still covered his high, narrow, clever looking head; while on his face there was not the vestige of a beard. It had either been plucked out in youth—a custom quite common in the Pacific in the olden days—or else nature had been kind and never troubled her future devotee with that useless appendage.

The Doctor spoke Hawaiian perfectly, and I understood it sufficiently well to follow the conversation which ensued. There was the usual ceremony of a light smoke, inquiries regarding each other's health, and that of their families, etc., etc. Then the Doctor moved nearer, and opened his battery in earnest. From various pockets he produced slowly, and with impressive manner, twenty-five of the handsome gold pieces which he had brought for the work. The eagle eyes of old Holokahiki actually glittered when he beheld this wonderful wealth. The effect was keenly but very quietly noted by the Doctor, who proceeded to explain that all this vast sum, and even more, would be his if he would do what the Doctor desired, viz., *take the spell off Julia.* It was a most delicate affair to carry on without unduly alarming the old

wizard. But the Doctor proceeded with consummate skill and good judgement; so much so, that in a short time Holokahiki asked for one hour to consult his oracles if, perchance, it were possible to devise a plan whereby Willoby's wife could be restored to health. He expressed himself as *exceedingly sorry and surprised to hear of the girl's illness*, which expressions the Doctor seemed to receive in perfect good faith and simplicity. Oh, how I envied the complete command of voice, feature, and manner of these two born diplomats!

With a graceful gesture, and an expression of regret at leaving us, the old man retired to the inner recesses of his domicile, while the Doctor and I betook ourselves to an orange tree, which was in heavy bearing, and regaled our inner man with the delicious fruit, afterwards falling back on the solace of a pipe, while we silently conjectured, with much inward anxiety, the probability of the success of our mission.

The wizard's old wife was trotting about, engaged in various household duties, muttering to herself, the while, something—which I whispered to the Doctor was no doubt Hawaiian for "double, double, toil and trouble." As she

passed to and fro, with her quick, active motions, she paid no more attention to us than if we had been two logs of wood which she had to avoid.

Holokahiki was absent just one hour by the watch. What he was doing, or how he was employed during that time, no one will ever know unless it be the father of all the black arts. The old man always did look repulsive, but when he returned he looked doubly so, owing to an expression of cunning and greed, which I suppose the sight of the gold produced on his skinny, fierce, old face. He sat down beside the Doctor, laid his long, lean hand lovingly on his shoulder, and began, "*Kuu hoa aloha* [my loving companion], I find that it is just possible to save the big foreigner's wife, but it will be a hard and dangerous work, and for it you must give double the amount of gold that is lying before us." I saw a great wave of satisfaction pass over the Doctor's face, and no doubt the old man saw it also; for he proceeded at once (laying his hand tenderly on the gold): "This sum must be paid at once, and upon the complete success of the cure, twenty-five more of the beautiful pieces must be given to *Kuu wahine* [my wife], who is the only creature who

can assist me in this most difficult and dangerous operation." Pausing a little, he procceded: "Most difficult of all, you must find a substitute who is perfectly willing to accept the fate which is now impending over your friend's wife." The Doctor shook his head, looking angry and disappointed. "I did not come to you to be made a fool of!" he said. "Who would willingly accept such a fate? what is gold to one who has to die? Does Holokahiki take me for a mad man that he dares to make such a proposition?"

The Doctor angrily shook the old man's hand off his shoulder, and rose as if to depart. Then he continued: "This is a trick to extort money from the *Haole* [foreigner], but see here, my brother physician, if my friend's wife dies, you make me your deadly enemy, and you know what that means." The old man sprang to his feet with all the agility of youth, and with a peculiarly soft, not to say fawning manner, laid his hand on the Doctor's arm, saying, in soft, impressive tones: "My dear friend! you are very learned, very wise, and therefore very powerful. But Holokahiki has a certain kind of knowledge, inherited from his forefathers, which it is impossible for white men to understand—

and with all their boasted acumen—*impossible for them to learn.* You came to me with a certain proposition—a very dangerous proposition for me. I should, perhaps, have ordered you and your friend from my poor, humble dwelling—the only spot that the greedy, grasping, white man has left me of all my lands and power. But you are my son-in-law, and, hitherto, my friend. For these reasons I listened to you, and in spite of many dangers to my own soul, I began to work out a plan agreeable to your wishes; when, alas! according to the inbred wickedness and foolishness of the white man, you fly into a passion and accuse me 'of a trick to extort money' simply because I was telling you beforehand what the fee would be, so that you could judge whether the case was worth the expense. The white doctor's method, on the contrary, is to conclude the case, and, whether it ends well or ill, charge just as much as he thinks he can extort from his victims. I leave it to you and your friend to say which course is the most honourable, not to say honest."

A queer gleam of humour came over the Doctor's usually melancholy face; then looking at me he laughed outright, saying: "By the bones of St. Peter! you have the best of it, my

learned and most logical father-in-law. But," and here he dropped into the vernacular, "how in the name of Satan am I to find one ready to assume, not only the risk, *but the certainty of death*, for the sake of a few paltry dollars?"

Holokahiki was now restored to his usual calm, self-possessed manner, and after a little pause, in which it was impossible to read either satisfaction or annoyance in his inscrutable face, said: "Send for Ah Sing, he is a very wise man, and will find what you require. But it will cost much money, and if you are not prepared for the expense let us drop the matter now and never refer to it again. Remember that I am an old man, and my only wish is to be left alone to end my days in peace and go to an honourable grave, which even the lust and hate of the treacherous white man cannot deprive me of."

He made a weird, graceful motion of the hand, and turning as if all interest in the affair had passed from his mind, walked slowly towards his hut. The impulsive Doctor sprang at him ere he had taken two steps, catching the old wizard by the shoulder. "Look here, my *Makua*" [father], he said, "this cannot end here. You must either save the girl, or I

shall become your enemy—and you know what that means!"

Holokahiki drew himself up with a wonderfully dignified gesture. "*Kauka* [doctor], let there be no misunderstanding between you and me! Make no threats, even in thoughtless anger. Threats are only made by weak men, and only alarm weak men, and no man ever made Holokahiki afraid. If you wish to proceed, send for Ah Sing."

Whereupon the Doctor meekly pocketed all appearance of superiority, and begged me at once to go in quest of his cook, the said Ah Sing. The Doctor's premises were hardly a quarter of a mile distant, and as the diligent Ah Sing was always closely attending to business I had no difficulty in finding him and acquainting him with his master's wish for his presence at the wizard's abode. The Chinaman, as a rule, is a man of few words. Without a question, and merely arranging some things in his cookhouse and locking the door, he announced his readiness to accompany me. Ah Sing and I were on excellent terms. I had enjoyed many a dainty repast, the result of his skilful brains and deft fingers; while he, on his part, had reaped at sundry times the reward (for soothing to happy

repose the irritability of my inward man) in the sweetest of all forms to a Celestial—*dollars*.

On my return I found the Doctor and Holokahiki in close confab, and I heard the former say, with something between a sigh and a groan, "Very well! I consent, but I fear no good will come of it."

* * * * *

A word or two *en passant* regarding Ah Sing. He had lived and worked hard in the islands for more than thirty years. He was a man a good deal above the average intelligence of his countrymen, both in regard to natural ability and education.

That is saying a good deal for one of a nation which is noted for men of more than ordinary shrewdness. At one time he had amassed a handsome fortune, for a Chinaman, and was about to realize the dream of all Celestials, viz., that some day he would return to his native land, take a young wife to console him in his old age, and secure everlasting peace at last by laying his bones safely under his native sod, leaving enough money to secure a certain number of Joss-sticks, stuck about his grave every New Year. All these high hopes had been sadly dispelled by the failure of the

firm to which he had intrusted his money for exchange on Canton — a rare misfortune to happen to a Chinaman; they are too shrewd to make many mistakes of that sort. So at the age of fifty-five poor Ah Sing found himself once more compelled to commence again the weary battle of life at the very foot of fortune's ladder. I knew the old chap's history off by heart, for he had often repeated the sad story while regaling me with sundry cups of delicious tea on many a quiet afternoon when I returned from a fern collecting or hunting expedition. I was as much at home in the Doctor's establishment as in my friend Willoby's house, and in that free and easy life it became quite natural to direct one's friend's servants as if they were one's own.

Holokahiki called to his wife to place a new *lauhala* mat under the *kukui* tree for us to sit on while discussing our business, which he at once requested the Doctor to explain fully and clearly to Ah Sing. I had never known an Anaana Priest to speak openly before. This was evidently Holokahiki's plan, so as to involve all concerned so deeply in the affair that not one could expose the others without incriminating himself; and I must say that it gave

me a very disagreeable sensation to find myself concerned in the infernal business. But being so deeply in, I felt it would be a traitorous sort of proceeding to desert when there seemed some prospect of helping my friend in his dire distress. Then there was also the weird fascination which always belongs to the unsolved mysteries of life and death.

.The Doctor coolly and clearly explained to Ah Sing the state of affairs, which was simply this: Mr. Willoby's wife was dying through the spells of witchcraft, a fact of which both man and wife were totally unaware. Willoby was, of course, exceedingly anxious to save his wife, and was willing to pay any reasonable sum, in gold coin, for her restoration to health. Holokahiki had *kindly and diligently* studied the case from every point of view, and had found that there was only one way of saving the girl's life, and that was by procuring a substitute who would willingly accept the situation; *for a consideration, of course.* I observed that while the Doctor stated the circumstances, Holokahiki never admitted by word or sign that he had heard of the case before that day. It might be the Doctor, or anybody else for all he knew, who had done the mischief. What he

was now concerned about—like the Doctor and myself—was to find a mode of cure! For this purpose a substitute must be forthcoming; the *modus operandi* would develop later. This was the case in so many words, and we all relapsed into silence, while the old wizard carefully filled his huge orange-wood pipe, lighted it with flint and steel (no nasty-smelling matches for a gentleman of the old school) and after a draw or two himself, politely passed it round. All this to gain time and let the *pro et contra* sink slowly into Ah Sing's soul.

None knew better than old Holokahiki that it was hopeless to seek a substitute among any other race save only the strangely constituted sons of the Celestial Empire—those extraordinary people, whose civilization has outlived the ravages of merciless Time, which has buried the majority of other ancient nations in obscurity; whose enlightenment is exactly the same to-day as in the days of Job, and whose stoical indifference to life and death is one of the unsolved enigmas of their race.

While the Doctor stated the case, Ah Sing never moved a muscle, and, indeed, hardly seemed to take any interest in the matter. In the pause of silence which ensued, he produced his opium

pipe from some mysterious pocket in his blouse, slipped a little black pellet into the bowl, lit the stuff with a match, or rather with two—opium does not ignite so readily as tobacco—and took five or six long whiffs, swallowing the smoke (which would have sent any one but a hardened smoker on his beam-ends at once). Then he calmly replaced his machinery in its hidden receptacle, and said, "Doctor, I welly sorry leave you! You my welly good flend, and boss! But, Ah Sing muchee poor man, and welly muchee old man!" (It had never occurred to me that Ah Sing was an old man.) "Ah Sing's heart muchee broke when bad Melican merchant man what white man call *failee*, but Chinaman call *stolee* all Ah Sing's money. Now, what can do? Brother poor too. No can take bones to China —no can be dead *good*! Give two thousand gold dollar, then Ah Sing like welly muchee die."

The Doctor gave a little gulp, whether of shock at the amount of money Ah Sing named, or of sorrow at the prospect of losing his excellent cook, I cannot say; but with this exception he gave no other outward sign of pain or surprise. He instantly signified to Ah Sing that his terms were accepted, and telling him to send for his brother to confirm the business,

dispatched me post-haste to Willoby for the balance of gold coin to make up the amount demanded by Ah Sing. At the same time he whispered that it would be the height of imprudence to attempt to make the Chinaman reduce his demand; and, indeed, as the Doctor remarked, it was a reasonable sum for the service required. While I was absent on my errand, the Doctor went over to his own house for the balance of the money we had left there. I had no troublesome questions from poor Willoby. He seemed to be acting under some sort of spell, and when I told him that five hundred dollars more were required, he simply asked, "gold or silver?" and when I said "gold," he dashed his safe open and produced a clean little bag of gold. This he quickly counted, and handed to me.

When I got back to Holokahiki's abode I found that Ah Sing's brother, Kim Su, had joined the party. I learned afterwards that Holokahiki, at Ah Sing's request, had sent his old wife with a message for the brother to come over at once on urgent business, as indeed it truly was!

When I had deposited the bag of gold beside the Doctor's chair—Holokahiki had fished out

an old-fashioned, high-backed concern, which he had placed for de Voe, he being the principal figure in the party—he at once arose, and in a clear, solemn tone of voice explained the business, from beginning to end, to Kim Su. During the recital neither of the Chinamen betrayed the slightest emotion, or moved a hand, or said one word, good or bad. When the Doctor had stated the case clearly and precisely, Ah Sing, as in right of being the party most deeply interested, proceeded to conclude and confirm the solemn business. He spoke quietly and earnestly to his brother, in Chinese, holding his hand the while, but in no way showing more feeling or excitement than ordinary Chinese do in making any business agreement. Then turning to the Doctor he said, "*Kauka!* Please makee count *dala*! Then business all finished. Ah Sing welly muchee glad he die good, bones go China, father, mother, brother, burn plenty Joss-sticks. No fear devil come any more." The Doctor emptied both sacks of coin on the clean mat, and proceeded to place the handsome pieces in rows, side by side, thus making a glittering array of a hundred double-eagles, which changed the brown *lauhala* mat into a veritable "cloth of gold."

When the Doctor had finished, he leaned back in his chair. The two Chinamen calmly looked at the fine display of wealth for fully five minutes, without moving, or speaking a word, and with a reverent sort of expression—as if they were praying—and may-be they were, poor souls, who knows?

Then Ah Sing methodically counted the pieces, moving them as he did so in front of his brother, as if they were playing some bewildering game of chess, and the rest of us were interested on-lookers. This part of the strange transaction being concluded — apparently to the perfect satisfaction of the brothers —there was still the awful fulfilling of the weird agreement, by Ah Sing handing over, or rather allowing Holokahiki to take, some part of the actual living Ah Sing, such as hair, or nails, or a tooth, or such like. The Chinaman showed that he fully understood the requirements of the case, for he at once held out his left hand, and the old wizard as promptly cut the nail of each finger and the thumb, carefully depositing the pieces in a neat little calabash with a lid, which he securely fastened. Of course, in any case of Anaana, articles from the person of the victim are a *sine qua non* for the

successful result of the case: these articles are just as effective, whether obtained with or without his or her knowledge or consent.

The Doctor rose from his chair, like a man who awakens from a nightmare thankfully realizing that the weird hag who was sitting on his heart was only a fleeting phantom of the night; the Chinamen picked up the two bags of gold (the reward of life and death) and walked off lovingly together; while Holokahiki and his old helpmeet disappeared into their hut, doubtless to gloat over their share of "the root of all evil." So the Doctor and I were left alone, with the unsatisfactory feeling that men have when they realize that step by step they have been led into a deed which at first they had no more intention of committing than had the babe at its mother's breast.

Next day I started for the mountains on a hunting and exploring expedition, amply provided with men and equipments by my friend Willoby. For some weeks I travelled far, and hunted hard, to get the taste out of my mouth of the disagreeable transaction in which, on my part, I had been most innocently entangled. I had a splendid trip, and bagged any amount of game, from wild cattle and goats to still wilder

horses, and returned to the coast in a little over a month, much restored in mind and body.

* * * * *

When I rode into my friend's yard with my trophies of the chase, and my boys cantering behind me, what a changed scene greeted me to that which I met on my former return, just six weeks before! Then, silence and gloom—the very dogs sharing the general depression with never a bark of welcome. Now, the usual racket of a Hawaiian home-coming, laughter and kindly greeting, dogs giving tongue, children tumbling about among the horses' legs, men and women in gay attire and with smiling faces preparing food, and—to my intense relief—Willoby and his wife, pictures of health and happiness, coming forward first to give me welcome!

I soon had a wash and rub down, and was seated in Willoby's *sanctum*, regaled with a mild lemon squash and a Manilla cigar. (Manillas were the fashionable smoke in the Pacific in those days.) Willoby, who had been engaged in directing the disposal of my trophies of the chase, came in, and, closing the door again, warmly clasped my hand, and sat down. What

a changed man he was now in comparison with the man he was when I started for the mountains five weeks previously! Then, thin, silent, distraught! Now, rosy of complexion, smiling, and *debonair*! He sat a little while looking at me, as if the contemplation gave him much satisfaction; and on my jokingly asking him if the scrutiny of my sun-burned nose gave him pleasure, he replied, "Yes! my dear friend! it gives me intense pleasure!" Then he continued with that peculiar tone of emotion which deep sincerity gives to a man's voice, "I am more than glad to see you. I could not rest contented until I thanked you from the bottom of my heart for being partly the means of rescuing my little wife from death! I have no language with which to express what this has been to me."

Willoby paused a little, went to the window, and pretended to look at something, I knowing all the while that it was only to hide his emotion, and he knowing perfectly well also that I knew. Women never practise such little tricks, although they do practise enough tricks, God knows, and may He in His mercy bless and forgive them. Women simply show their emotion unreservedly, whether you like it or not; and really, upon the whole, I suppose it is the better

plan. But then, you know, men are poor hands at emotion, unless, of course, it is the grand and overwhelming emotion of battle, wherein the noblest natures rise above all the brutal instincts of low passions to the sublime height of self-sacrifice.

In a little while Willoby returned to his seat, and fell back on the never-failing resource of a cigar. After smoking a bit, he said, "I cannot tell you what this has been to me. You see," he continued, "for good or for evil, the Pacific is my destiny. No more high life for me. No more the refinement and glamour and splendour of the fascinating West-end houses where I was once a welcome guest! Never again shall the beautiful stateliness and sweetness of high-bred English women hold me under their gracious spell! No more shall the calm purity of the country home—great or lowly—soothe my soul with the indescribable peace which I think belongs exclusively to the old-fashioned English home of peer or peasant. No! no! All that is past for me—like some dimly remembered childhood's dream of lying on our mother's bosom, and being soothed by words we shall never hear again. So you see the only hope for me now is to keep the girl who loves me with her whole,

wild little heart, though our usual thoughts are as far apart as the Poles. Yes! That is my one hope and sheet-anchor to save me from tumbling down to the lowest depths of beach-combing degradation." Willoby laid his hand on mine with a gentle, loving pat, which showed how deeply he was moved as he said in a trembling, low voice: "Yes! I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and let me say, without irreverence God knows, that you have saved a soul from death, and (I hope) covered a multitude of sins." It sounded strange to hear Willoby reverently repeating Scripture, but I remembered he was a great reader of his Greek Testament—a curiously bound little volume—one of the few relics of his scholarly days.

Just then Julia struck up a rattling half German, half Yankee march which somehow made us both smile, with the glitter of tears in our eyes, and both thinking—I verily believe—on the life which *was*, and that which *might have been*, in the old homeland.

"And now!" she cried in rather a high-pitched voice, "Helemai—Paaina!—Olua haole kamaileo nui loa." (Come to dinner you two talking foreigners.) As soon as we were comfortably seated at the really well-appointed table,

Mrs. Willoby continued: "Now Mr. Howard, surely you can give me some rational information about hats and skirts, and other sweet things you saw in Sydney, or, better still, in London, if you were there lately, for of course I must have the latest to make the judge's wife green with envy. There was a whaler in the bay while you were in the mountains—by the way, I wonder whatever you and Willoby can see in these dreary woods and mountains to make you both love them so—and the captain's wife told me that hats were getting bigger and bigger and skirts tighter—above you know—and longer, and more and more wobbly. But she had been away from New Bedford more than a year, so I do not take much stock in what she said." Thus the little half-caste rattled on, from one subject to another, with sprightly, shallow, yet really amusing talk. Willoby sat contentedly and quietly eating his dinner, evidently quite happy to see his pretty wife in beaming, high spirits, and exuberant health.

After a pause of silence and hearty eating, Julia started again. "Oh! but—laying aside for the moment the important subject of dress—I must tell you how we got on after you started for the mountains. You remember how very ill

I was? So ill that my dear husband became more and more anxious, and had Doctor de Voe with me every other hour of the day and night. The poor Doctor had a bad time of it; but I must say he was very good and never grumbled, although he is a pretty peppery man at times. But at last even he began to look blue, and then I thought, *make loa wau*, and took to my bed in earnest, feeling so weak and done for, that 'I didn't care whether school kept or not,' and I really felt more inclined to go than to stay—so you can imagine how near I was to *poule*" (darkness).

"Then a wonderful thing happened. On the very day that you started the steamer Kelauea came into the bay, and among other things for the Doctor there was a wonderful box of medicine (pills) all the way from Paris. Those pills saved my life!" Willoby was now at his dessert, and his face wore a very sober—a sort of absent-minded expression, while he steadily looked at his plate. "I know," continued Julia, "that my husband does not take much interest in those pills, because he always puts on that far-away look whenever I mention the subject. But if he had felt the mysterious sensation which I felt—as if I were being carried by unseen hands from

the dark portals of death back to life and light —this strange change beginning on the very day I commenced to take the medicine—of course he would feel, as I do, that it was the Doctor's wonderful *laau* which saved my life!"

"My dear," said Willoby, looking fondly at his wife, "I do most firmly believe that it was the Doctor—under God's mercy—who saved your life. As to the means—that I know nothing about; for the result, I am, and always will be, most profoundly thankful." "There now!" cried his wife, as she dashed at Willoby and kissed him fervently. "There now! it makes me so happy to hear you speak so like a good missionary, for really sometimes you make me fear you are an unbelieving Jew, and never had the advantage of a Christian upbringing like Mr. Howard and your wee wife! As to the means," continued Mrs. Willoby, "there can be no question about that. You know what a fearful sum you had to pay the Doctor, and he did not charge a single dollar for his own services, all the money was for the medicine. *Two thousand five hundred dollars for twenty-five little bits of pills! Exactly one hundred dollars each!* There were just twenty-five, I remember that very well, for the Doctor gave me the first one on

the very day you" (looking at me) "started for the mountains, which was the 1st of June, and he gave me the last on my birthday, the 25th.

On the day you started I was very low, as you will no doubt remember. I was feeling very miserable—not so much for myself—that was all past, and I only wished to get to my long sleep, for I was very weary. But I was feeling exceedingly miserable for my poor husband's lonely life after I was gone, and I kept hoping that when you returned you would take him away back to his old life in England, where he would soon get to think of all out here as only a pleasant, hazy sort of dream. But though I wished he would, yet it made me more miserable again to think that he would forget! Thus I lay between life and death, always with the feeling of being carried by invisible hands, and soothed by soft music which was not produced by voice or instrument; only music floating and drifting, and giving a great sense of restfulness in the dim twilight which surrounded me." Then the little half-caste, with a strange look in her great luminous eyes, as if she again saw the shadowy outline of the borderland she was describing, and heard the music made by no "voice or instrument" said, as though she were thinking aloud,

not speaking to us: "I have often wondered why we islanders are so timid at little dangers and so calm when death is inevitable. Now I *know*, for I have been there and found that when we get very near to death all fear vanishes and a great desire comes over the soul to go forward, and a shuddering fear if we are commanded to return to the body." The spiritual light faded out of the eyes, she looked sleepy and tired, as she said, "And so I fell asleep, and slept for five days!—didn't I, Willoby?" "Yes, my dear!" said her husband; "and I thought you would never awake again in this world."

With the characteristic sudden change of the native mind from grave to gay, Julia went to the lady-whaler's old cottage piano and rattled off with much vim, "Marching through Georgia," with wonderful variations.

After sunset Doctor de Voe came over, and we spent a pleasant evening, with talk, music, cigars, and lemon squash. The Doctor had a good voice, and sang songs in every language in which I knew even as much as a word of objurgation or salutation, and many others which I could not even guess at. Mrs. Willoby played his accompaniments, if not with perfect accuracy,

at least with a kind of adaptability which helped the singer at uncertain bits of a song. Of course in many of the outlandish songs the Doctor had the field all to himself; but in these he got along wonderfully well, for he had learned them in his gay student days without any accompaniment save the rattle of glasses and knuckles on the table.

De Voe took his departure a little after eleven. He wished me to come over to his place and spend a few days with him. But, he said, it was no use coming that night, as he had to sit up with a poor young fellow who was lying in a native house dying of consumption. He was what one so often meets in the Pacific, a derelict of good family, come at last to the end of his tether. The kind-hearted Doctor had found him helpless in a native hut, and was now doing his best to smooth the poor waif's last journey.

Next morning I went over to de Voe's place and found him in a rather lugubrious frame of mind. He had not slept a wink since we parted the night before, but that was not the cause of his depressed spirits. The Doctor could go for many sleepless nights without showing a sign of fatigue. He told me he had acquired the habit

during the Commune in Paris, when the sights and sounds which a medical man was called upon to see and hear were so awful that sleep became only a weird nightmare, more exhausting than sleeplessness, and for weeks he did not sleep at all!

The present cause of the Doctor's low spirits was the passing that morning—after a weary restless night—of the poor derelict. He had talked much of his mother—away back in a New England village in Massachusetts—who had struggled and pinched to give him a classical education, with the only result, seemingly, of a misspent life, death in a native hut, and a nameless grave in South Kona, Hawaii. You observe that I said "seemingly" just now for want of a better word. But I have great hopes that no well-intentioned efforts will prove useless, that no self-sacrifice will be fruitless, and that somehow, and somewhere, derelicts will make up for leeway, and find the port at last which they missed so sadly on life's stormy voyage. I *dinna ken!*—but that's my hope—and if it is not realized, something better and more appropriate will be, which is a great comfort to reflect upon, when the night is dark, and the ghosts of the past are crowding about us.

As a rule I have found Frenchmen very sensitive creatures with regard to their mothers. Doctor de Voe was no exception to this laudable characteristic. The sad, regretful, weak words of the dying man had deeply stirred him, and his thoughts that morning were clinging fondly around a little cottage and vineyard, on the banks of the Garonne, in far away France. Across his memory, sweeping away all obstacles which lay between, there appeared a bronzed old woman in wooden clogs, white cap, little red shawl, and homespun petticoats, calling her old man and boys to their midday meal of soup, brown bread, and a bit of lean meat.

"Poor fare enough," said the Doctor, with a little tremble in his voice; "but, *ah mon Dieu!* more delicious than the banquet of a king. And it is such homes," he continued, "that save France from annihilation." All the while he was speaking the Doctor was deeply interested in getting a curious and rare specimen of lizard into a bottle of spirit. He had long been anxious to obtain a specimen, but hitherto had been unable to induce a native to catch one. Hawaiians, like the rest of mankind (excepting the *genus doctor*), have a wholesome dread and

hatred of the form which the father of all ill assumed on his first appearance on our poor earth.

The Doctor, as his usual custom was, produced various creature comforts of the most tempting French invention, inviting me to solace and refresh myself, after my walk in the hot sun, while he carefully finished the execution and preservation of the ugly yet attractive lizard. This I proceeded to do without further ceremony, in the meantime watching with much interest the Doctor's scientific operations. My mind naturally being taken up with Willoby's case, I remarked how glad I was to find his wife quite restored to her usual health. The old Frenchman looked at me with half-closed eyes, and nodded, without saying a word. After a bit—when he had made the lizard comfortable in the bottle—he said, "You and Ah Sing used to be good friends; would you like to see him?" Of course I said it would afford me pleasure to see again my old friend who had often ministered to my comfort in days gone by.

I had been rather surprised that Ah Sing had not yet turned up, as his usual custom was, to greet me with a delicious cup of tea, freshly brewed, sugarless and milkless. Ah Sing—like

all true Chinamen—held these additions in detestation; barbarous and perverted tastes, invented by Westerners. Upon asking if his admirable cook and factotum (Ah Sing knew more, and did more of the Doctor's business, than de Voe himself) had taken a holiday, as I did not see him about, the Doctor told me, in a dry, constrained sort of way, that Ah Sing had fallen into a peculiar lassitude which quite incapacitated him for performing his usual duties. Since his weakness (it was not sickness within the knowledge of pharmacology), Ah Sing had gone over to his brother's place, for the sake of having his nursing.

The Doctor kindly proposed to accompany me to Kim Su's abode; he had not seen Ah Sing for some days, and wished to note the progress, or subsidence, of the strange malady. As for doing anything for him medically, that, the Doctor admitted, was beyond his power, even if Ah Sing had been willing to resort to medical advice, which he was not.

Then, the subject not being a pleasant one to either of us, we relapsed into silence, and started for the Chinamen's domicile, along a narrow, rocky path, shaded by splendid lehua trees, gorgeous with masses of crimson blossom.

In half an hour or so we reached Kim Su's estate—one acre of rocks and trees, inclosed by a stiff stone wall—within whose boundary no Hawaiian, man, woman, or child was permitted to enter, excepting strictly upon business. This reserve on his part had not militated in the least against the Chinaman's business (a queer little miscellaneous store); indeed, it rather aided his trading influence, giving him a peculiarly high character as a grave, wise man who attended to his own affairs strictly and well, eschewing the common frivolities of life —*He Pake lealea ole* (a non-pleasure loving Chinaman), as they tersely expressed it.

We found Kim Su sitting on the rickety doorstep of his dwelling, calmly enjoying a contemplative smoke. He saluted us pleasantly, and on our inquiry for his brother he graciously motioned us to enter. The place had rather an overpowering odour of opium, sharks' fins, and other unaccountable blends of Chinese housekeeping. A chair, a rough settee, a camphorwood trunk, and a miscellaneous collection of cooking and other utensils, littered the room rather inconveniently. On a bed in one corner lay Ah Sing, with the gray shadows gathering on his thin, yellow face, and evidently on the

point of embarking on that voyage from which no voyager returns.

With man's usual shirking of disagreeable things I had shaken off the oppression of the scene with old Holokahiki (of which I had been an involuntary spectator), and on my return from the mountains I had found matters so pleasant, that I had easily persuaded myself that everything had come right *somehow*, and asked no questions. Thus soothing my conscience with the weak human salve of "the end justifies the means," I had nearly managed to forget the whole ghastly affair.

But Nemesis never fails to find us sooner or later, and here she had me face to face. Ah Sing turned on us the great luminous eyes of the dying, which already saw the cold river flowing at his feet—the river that he was just about to cross. He recognized us in a moment, and smiled faintly as I laid my hand on his long, thin, beautifully-shaped fingers. For Ah Sing had come of good family, as he had often impressed upon me, while complacently admiring his shapely hands, tapering fingers, and nails projecting a quarter of an inch or so; nothing like the length, he would sadly inform me, they were in the days of his prosperity.

I was prepared, by what the Doctor had told me, to find the poor fellow much run down, but I did not by any means expect to see the mere shadow of the strong man I had parted with only a few weeks previously. If we are with any one daily during the progress of disease we mercifully become so accustomed to the gradual change that we never experience the shock we feel when we part from one in robust health, and meet again on the brink of the grave. The Doctor felt the dying man's pulse and whispered —as he took the chair which Kim Su politely handed, while I sat down on an empty kerosene box—"I had no idea he was so low—*Bon Dieu!* no idea."

A moment after the slight exertion and excitement of meeting us, Ah Sing fell into a quiet sleep, which continued for half an hour or so, while the Doctor, Kim Su, and myself remained quite silent; each one, no doubt, engaged with his own peculiar line of thought. Then Ah Sing sighed softly, and awoke. A great rush of tenderness came over my heart for the poor fellow who was so calmly entering the unsolved mystery. Laying my hand on his, I said: "Can we do anything for you, Ah Sing? The Doctor and I are deeply grieved to

find you so ill, my friend!" He brightened up at my words, a look of the old shrewdness mingled in his eyes with the pathos of death, while he whispered, "Ah Sing die welly good—go China—father—mother—brother—sister—plenty joss sticks—Devil—he—no—can—come—Ah Sing—welly—muchee—happy!—muchee—happy——" A slight shiver, as if his feet had touched the cold river, and Ah Sing passed, like a tired child falling asleep.

The Doctor rose, crossed himself, and reverently muttered a *Paternoster*; something, perhaps, he had not done since he left the little cottage on the banks of the Garonne, forty adventurous years before.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE OLD SOUTH

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AS WE HEARD IT FROM JAMES WILLARD, IN THE MAMMOTH CAVE, KENTUCKY

IT is a good many years ago—how many I hardly care to recall exactly—since a dear companion and I found ourselves, after some months of wandering in Mexico and the United States, delivered from the coach unceremoniously, like two packages of merchandise, at the Mammoth Cave Hotel, Kentucky. Then we were instantly, silently, and solemnly presented with a pen to sign our names in a great book; a universal ordeal in all American hotels, as if each new arrival were a criminal derelict who had just been captured, and must be kept safe and sound.

It was a lovely morning in early June. This part of old Kentucky was looking at its very best; the trees were in full leaf, the flowers, grasses, and vines in gorgeous bloom. On the low lands stretched field after field of that splendid plant, Indian corn, with its tender green leaves, and its graceful, purple tassel. Birds were singing, beautiful butterflies fluttering joyously through their short, gay life, amid the bloom of the buckeyes, apple orchards, and hedges of wild rose and honeysuckle.

Of course I need hardly say that we had made our pilgrimage to Kentucky for the purpose of exploring the great caves which take part of their name from the State. But before starting upon the serious business of investigating the caves, we spent some happy days of idleness in the vicinity of the hotel; among other things, studying the curious entrance of the cave, where the colonies of the weird, funny little bats hang by their tiny claws in countless, silent hoards, all day long, and skim and flutter in seemingly objectless flight, through all the hours of darkness.

After some days idling thus, we began to make arrangements for our excursion in the cave. One curious thing about this excursion

is that it can be made just as well by night as by day. This is a feature which one is very apt to overlook in making arrangements, but which is realized in a moment when one reflects that the faintest glimmer of daylight never penetrates those regions of everlasting darkness and silence.

I mortally detest to be trotted around anywhere with a party of tourists, while a guide gives a glib description which he has learned by heart of things in which he takes no more interest and understands no whit better, and perhaps less, than a parrot saying "Pretty Polly." We chose a time when there were few visitors at the hotel, and none going to the cave save our two selves. We provided plenty of luncheon, and a couple of shawls, as the air is apt to be chilly in those underground regions if one takes a longer rest than usual after walking for hours without thinking of distance, a thing one is liable to do in a cave of such vast extent as the Mammoth. I forget at the moment how many miles the cave extends, but I know it is anywhere you like between ten and twenty.

James Willard, our guide, was a distinguished-looking man of maybe fifty or a little over. He had been a Confederate soldier in the gigantic

struggle between North and South. Like most Southerners he had been ruined by the war and embittered by the collapse of the Southern dream—viz., the dissolution of a disagreeable partnership with a people whom the proud South both hated and despised. At the close of the war, Willard, like many Southerners, tried California, and after many ups and downs, had drifted back as far as Kentucky, taken a fancy to the weird cave and beautiful country, and as often happens to the flotsam and jetsam in the voyage of this strange life, had been now stranded for twenty years at a spot where he, at first, only intended to stay for a week or two.

Willard was a man of few words, so few, the landlord of the hotel told us, that he was not much appreciated as a guide. No man in the district knew the cave better, or as well. But although he told all that was necessary for any reasonable traveller, yet to the ordinary tourist who loves to be kept lively by a running fire of light talk, James Willard's taciturn habits were by no means acceptable. In consequence the poor fellow's business had seriously fallen off, and he was much pleased when we engaged him by the day as our guide in prowling about the country, as well as investigating the cave.

Like most men of thoughtful habits and wandering life, Willard's mind was stored with much knowledge, strange legends of the country, and still stranger reminiscences of his eventful life.

One day we were taking our lunch in the cave at the strange, sad, silent ruins of what was once a sort of Sanatorium for persons afflicted with the fell disease, consumption. Many years ago a doctor of an investigating turn of mind had taken the idea into his head that the rarefied air or ozone of the cave would cure his consumptive patients; and, accordingly, he had a building erected wherein to effect cures, as he told them, but no doubt simply to experiment upon the poor creatures, as doctors are so fond of doing. It was certainly a strange experiment to incarcerate, in this womb of the earth, people already depressed by disease. The darkness, the silence of utter lifelessness, and a chill as of the grave, made me think that the doctor must have been not only an enthusiast, but a very cold-blooded customer as well. Be that as it may, the experiment proved a failure, as the desolate, crumbling ruins in the silent cave testify.

As we finished our lunch and were preparing

to take our way to the ghostly river Styx, I noticed that Willard knelt for a minute beside two low mounds of sand and rocky debris, as if he were arranging or smoothing the stony heaps. A furtive salute of the old soldier, as he rose from his knees, roused my curiosity, and, without thinking, I laughingly said, "Why, Willard! are you laying a ghost, or the spirit of the cave, which the Indians say still holds dominion in defiance of the power and unbelief of the white man?" Willard made no reply, and during the rest of that day was, even for him, unusually silent and self-absorbed.

Some days after this, as we were returning from a very happy and successful fishing expedition, and were passing near Willard's queer old patched domicile, he proposed that we should rest on his veranda, while he brewed that most refreshing of all drinks, especially after a long tramp—tea! To this we gladly assented, and in a remarkably short time—all old campaigners know how to prepare eatables and drinkables quickly—we were solacing our wearied faculties with "the cups that cheer but not inebriate."

It was one of those perfect days which are sometimes photographed in the memory so in-

tensely that they remain beautiful pictures, clear and distinct for the rest of our lives. I think it must be some subtile spiritual artist who paints those wonderful pictures which never fade; certainly it is nothing which we can lay our hands upon, and say it was *this*, or *that*, which engraved it upon the tablets of memory never to be effaced! It may be simply a restful, happy, beautiful day in a foreign land, or it may be a misty day in the land of our birth, with the gray sea leaping on the dulse covered rocks, and the white gulls sweeping on unerring wing to their nests on the cliffs. Or again, it may be a day when the interests of this life were swept from our broken hearts, and joy and sorrow became only words to us for evermore. It may be trifles, as we say in our blindness, for there are no trifles in this life, or it may be life and death—or perchance, greater tragedies than these—but certainly most men and women have a private picture gallery into which no one else can look, which no misfortune of poverty shall ever drag with desecrating hands into an auction room. And when we at last lock the door, even Death himself, powerful as he is, cannot open it without our consent.

It was a lovely day; the sun was far past

the meridian, and the splendid buckeyes were throwing long, delicious shadows over the fair landscape. Wild roses, honeysuckle, and vines climbed and rambled over Willard's shanty, making it a most artistic bower, if one did not pry too deeply into his domestic arrangements; and of course no well-disposed persons do pry deeply into a single man's abode. If they do they are sure to meet with disappointments.

This had been Willard's "home," as he expressed it, for more than twenty years, and he told us that as it was freehold, and the only place on earth for which he felt any affection, he intended to live out the rest of his days on this spot, and die here, when his last muster-call sounded.

My companion and I had become deeply interested in—I might almost say attached to—this reticent, lonely man. We felt convinced that there was some sorrowful tragedy beyond the usual portion allotted to mankind hidden away in that silent, undemonstrative heart, and I think that he had met few, if any, who had shown him the same sympathy, the subtile influence of which soon after drew from Willard the sorrowful story of his life.

Shortly after this, showery weather came on

and put an end to our fishing excursions. But as rain or sunshine make no difference to the abodes of cimmerian darkness, we arranged with Willard for another long expedition in the cave. Promptly on time—soldier like—he was at the hotel next morning. Provided with an ample lunch and a couple of shawls, which Willard strapped on his back soldier-fashion, we sallied forth, and soon exchanged the light of day for the regions of endless night.

We spent some hours at the weird river Styx, watching the strange antics of the eyeless fish. The blaze of our torches had no effect upon these visionless creatures, but the least blow of our hands on the water sent them scurrying in all directions, so sensitive have become their organs of hearing and touch. Then we wandered on past the "fat man's misery," once again gazed with awe and reverence on the vast "Cathedral," with its beautiful starry vault, finally settling down at the ruined *Sanatorium* for our lunch and midday rest.

We ate our meal as usual, that is to say, rather silently, and as we finished, and before we rose, I said quietly to Willard that he must have heard or seen some incident connected with the ruins which he might gratify us by relating

before we turned homewards. His always sad face grew sadder as I spoke, and I felt sorry that perhaps I had, unthinkingly, touched some painful chord in the silent man's heart. I hastily made some excuse for referring to what was not pleasant to him, and at once began preparing for a start. "No! No!" said Willard, "I think it would do me good to tell the story to you who have shown such kind sympathy for my solitary life, such sympathy as not one soul has shown to me for more than twenty lonely years."

* * * * *

Without more ado he began to talk in a low unimpassioned voice, more as if he were thinking aloud than speaking to us. "I was born on the 'Winnimaca Plantation,' in Virginia. I was an only son, and was brought up as Southern boys were brought up before the war (that is, sons of the great planters) with all the advantages and luxury which wealth could command. My father owned more than ten thousand acres of first-rate sugar and cotton land, and a thousand slaves, more or less. Those who think that Southern slave owners were cruel, hard masters do not know the facts of the case. The Southerners were no more cruel to their slaves

than Northern, or English gentlemen are cruel to their servants; and in most cases were kinder and more thoughtful of the welfare of their people than the general run of great employers of labour. On the plantations the aged and the sick were well cared for, and, excepting in the rare cases when estates became bankrupt, families were never separated. I have seen much more misery among negroes since freedom was proclaimed than ever was known in the old days.

"But there is no use talking of that now. We fought for what we considered a righteous cause, as our forefathers had fought a hundred years before, the *right to manage our own affairs*, and if any *Southerner* tells you that he is glad we were defeated, he either lies or is a fool.

"When I was ten years old my mother died, and in the wretchedness and loneliness of our great silent house my father induced a sister of his (who had married, gone to England, and become a widow with one child) to come back and make her home at Winnimaca.

"When my aunt came to take charge of my father's house, her pale little English child, Mildred, was six or seven years of age. Not a beautiful, or even a pretty child, but with the

most wonderful eyes I ever saw, or ever shall see, until I see the face of *one* angel in heaven, if ever the Lord permits me to get there. It was not their colour, which was a sort of purple like the colour of far-off hills when the sun sets on still summer nights, it was their expression; a look as if they saw things not of this earth, as if they had seen the mystery of life clearly revealed, an expression which held me spell-bound from the first moment I looked into them, and will hold me spell-bound while I retain consciousness in this world or the next."

Willard sat quite silent for five minutes or so, looking at the faint traces of the two low mounds which lay within a few feet of where we sat. Then he continued, in the same even, low voice:

"Of course my little cousin and I became daily companions. We studied together under the same governesses and tutors. We played, rode our ponies, boated on the beautiful river, and, in short, had the usual upbringing which loving care, wealth, and refinement afford.

"When I was twenty and Mildred seventeen, the South declared her independence, and the clouds of war enveloped the country, never for one moment lifting until a fair and prosperous

land was utterly ruined, families scattered or dead, beautiful homes tenantless, fertile lands gone back into pine-barrens, delicately reared women and children begging food and shelter from strangers, wretched, dangerous bands of negroes prowling about in search of a living by plunder, instead of by honest work; while the greedy, Northern carpet-bagger ruled—or rather battened—on whatever was left in the land.

"But I must go back a little. When the Southern flag went up, my father, like all the influential gentlemen in the South, gave everything he had to the cause. He had been educated at West Point, and held a commission in the United States Army. Of course he at once resigned and raised a regiment of cavalry in his district, supplying most of the horses from his own splendid stud. Every man in the district volunteered, and it was with the greatest difficulty that a few were persuaded to remain at home, to keep the plantations in something like order.

"Winnimaca became the head-quarters of the regiment. Of course I was enrolled, but simply as a private, having had no previous military training.

"Our Major, the officer next in rank to my

father who was Colonel of the regiment, was Gordon Maxwell, a young planter from western Virginia, who, like my father, had had the advantage of a West Point education. Maxwell was a gay, dashing fellow, full of fun and frolic, yet with the somewhat ceremonious manners of the old South, which is always attractive to womankind. He stayed at Winnimaca for six weeks, and with the freedom of intercourse and mutual interests, became almost like a member of the family. Then came the order from General Lee for our regiment to move west at once. Mildred and her mother were left in charge of the plantation with a trustworthy overseer, the household servants, and the field hands.

"Mildred and I had always liked each other, and were engaged to be married when this *short campaign* was over, which we felt sure would soon give the Yankees all the fighting they desired.

"I was very much occupied with various matters, besides my daily drill, during the month or six weeks that Gordon Maxwell was with us at the old home, or I might have known then what I learned afterwards. But even if I had known, I cannot see how it would have changed

the course of events which the future held in store for us all.

"I was absent from Winnimaca for a little over two years. During that time our regiment had been in many engagements, and had lost heavily in men and officers. My father was severely wounded in a skirmish near the Potomac, and, owing to want of proper care and treatment, died three days afterwards. Before my father's death he instructed Major Maxwell (who would succeed to the command of the regiment) to grant me leave to go home and see what I could do for my aunt and Mildred. The very day after my father's death we had a severe fight with the enemy, in which Major—now Colonel—Maxwell was killed while leading us in a desperate charge against fixed bayonets. I was riding by his side at the moment, and saw what was going to happen, which he did not, as he was looking back and cheering on his men. In the midst of the hellish uproar, I tried to save him by cutting down the soldier who had his bayonet at Maxwell's breast, but I was one moment too late. By the impact of the dying man's thrust, and Maxwell's headlong speed, the weapon went clean through his body, and he fell without a cry or a groan.

"We were driven back by overwhelming numbers, and forced to leave our killed and wounded in the hands of the enemy. I had a sabre cut on my sword arm, and was invalided home for a month, not a day longer; for by this time the South could not spare a man so long as he was able to fire a gun, or hit even with one hand. Our armies were hard pressed everywhere, and, at the best, were only able to hold their own, a hard task, in face of diminishing numbers, and dreadful hardships for want of even the common necessaries of life. Of course, in the unsettled state of the country, agriculture was sadly neglected. Having no navy, our coasts were closely blockaded by the enemy, so that we could receive nothing from abroad, the occasional escape of a blockade-runner not being worthy of notice, and merely affording us amusement and admiration for the brave fellows engaged in the hazardous, if often profitable, game.

"On the other hand, the Northern armies were constantly replenished by hoards of adventurers from Europe, while our armies, to a man, were made up of fathers and sons of the South. A thousand European waifs might fall on the Northern side, and not a tear be shed; but

never a Southern soldier fell but some lonely woman's heart broke for father, husband, sweetheart, son, or brother. Besides these things, the actual disturbing presence and horror of war were far removed from the North. Her trade, manufactures, foreign commerce, went on unimpaired, in fact, in many cases improved, by the war. These mighty advantages had not been taken into serious account by the hot-headed South. They knew their cause was just, and, like their Cavalier forefathers, gaily drew sword, never counting the cost.

"When our regiment answered the roll-call after the fight in which Major Maxwell was killed, it was found so badly cut up that it was thought expedient to draft the few remaining men fit for service into other regiments. But I am glad to say that the *Winnimaca Troopers*, as we were called, left a record of splendidly gallant deeds in an army where brave men and gallant deeds were the rule, not the exception.

"Mine was a sad home-coming. I found things badly changed. During the first year of the war matters had gone on well enough. The negroes remained perfectly loyal, rejoicing over every victory our side gained 'ober dem mis'able white trash,' as they expressed it, for whom

the common field hand had no love, and less respect. This feeling of dislike continues among the old negroes to the present day. The North conquered the South and made an end of all Southern institutions; but there was one thing they did not do, they never won the negro's heart and loyalty. This is a very curious enigma to the Yankee mind, in face of their loudly reiterated statement that the war was fought for the freedom of the slaves; a statement which the long-delayed proclamation of emancipation utterly disproves; and the ordinary negro is astute enough to know that the proclamation was simply a last, desperate, political venture.

"As the war dragged along the clouds grew darker and darker. No one knew what would happen on the morrow. Men and women, white and black, on lonely plantations and in isolated hamlets, grew restless with protracted anxiety; the good with fear of the horrors which might happen, the bad with eager anticipation of plunder and rapine.

"I found my aunt and cousin deeply depressed and sharing the common gloom and fear.

"When I told them of the death of my father and Gordon Maxwell, their last hopes seemed to fail; and in a day or two they told me that

they had decided to enter the Convent at Richmond and devote the rest of their lives to nursing the sick and comforting the desolate.

"I could not understand Mildred at all. I reminded her of our engagement, but she only shook her head, and said, '*that was all past and gone*.' Of course, under the sadly changed condition of all our circumstances, I could do nothing to prevent Mildred and her mother from carrying out their intentions. I had to report myself at head-quarters in a couple of weeks, and in any case I had no right to interfere with their resolve. Besides, I began to think, when I reflected upon all our miserable circumstances, that their plan was perhaps the best after all.

"My last week at the beautiful old homestead was a strangely sad week to me. The silence of cold desolation had fallen upon the *house* which all my life had represented to me warmth and cheerfulness. The overseer and the hands carried on the work in a half-hearted manner, knowing that the old order of things was vanishing for ever, and a new *régime*, by some hoped for, by most dreaded, was coming, heralded by ominous sounds of dire suffering and death on the wings of the wind.

"Six months afterwards the splendid old man-

sion which was built when Charles II was king was first looted of all portable valuables, and then, with its priceless collection of pictures, furniture, and art treasures dating back for hundreds of years, was ruthlessly burned to the ground by those who professed to be the pioneers of a higher civilization than had ever been in the land before.

"I saw little of my aunt and cousin at this time; they were much engaged with their preparations for leaving the old home.

"Mildred, who had been my playmate for ten years, and of late my promised wife, had completely changed from the happy girl into the cold sedate woman, who showed no interest in anything save the career which she had chosen for her future life. I accompanied them to Richmond, saw them safely installed as nursing sisters, and after a hasty and formal goodbye, I went off to join the regiment in which I had received a captain's commission.

"I must pass over the next ten years of sorrow, misfortune and wandering. My father's fine estate was sold for a mere song, on account of what the newly arrived *carpet-baggers* were pleased to call *debt*, instead of a more objectionable word. A pushing Yankee, who had

become the owner, was murdered soon afterwards for slapping 'a dirty impudent nigger,' as the unfortunate man called his murderer. Before the war a negro would have been soundly flogged for the offence of impudence, without ever dreaming of retaliating by word or deed; and the only consolation he would receive from his fellows would have been to be told, 'Dat it sarved you right, you good fo' nothin' sassy nigga, you!' I leave it to the wisdom of philanthropists and philosophers to explain the reason and the advantage of the change: I only state the fact.

"After ten years of fighting, wandering, and working hard for a living, I struck this place, and with a little money I had saved I bought the bit of a ranch you saw yesterday; and here I have stuck ever since, and here, please God, I shall die.

"I have worked at one thing and another, but a man is not much use in this country unless he has a trade, a profession, or better still, some swindling trick at his finger ends. However, I liked the place, made myself thoroughly acquainted with the country—especially with the caves—and, as a guide, always made a sort of living.

"When I came it was just about the end of the cruel swindle of keeping poor creatures in the cave for the pretended cure of consumption. Of the many who had been here only one remained. The doctor could get no one to stay with his unfortunate patient, who was not only in the last stages of the disease, but was also said to be a little 'off.' As I was in the cave one day the doctor entreated me to stay with the sick man until a nurse could be got from the convent at Cincinnati, a sister of mercy being the only sort that the doctor could induce to undertake the miserable task.

"When I took my patient in hand I found him practically a dying man. He had got past the stage of coughing, and was so very weak that he could only speak in broken whispers. He told me that he was forty-five years of age, but he looked twenty years older. I made the poor fellow as comfortable as the wretched circumstances would permit. During the first twenty-four hours I was with him he took not the least notice of anything. He simply lay with his eyes closed, sighing with a sort of feeble satisfaction when I gave him some little liquid nourishment and wiped his fevered face and hands with a cool, damp cloth.

"From my old soldier habits of order I suppose, I fell into the custom of arranging the few household articles as ship-shape as I could, and then I sat down by the sick man's couch to attend to what I could do for him in his sad condition. Once, after a feeble spasm of *attempted* coughing, and while I was bathing his face, he lay so absolutely quiet that I held the lamp near his bed, really thinking, from his stillness, that he had passed away. But I found him much more alive than at any time since I had taken him in charge, staring at me with wide open eyes, and whispering my name. This puzzled me, as the doctor had not mentioned my name, only introducing me to the sick man as his nurse until the sister arrived from the convent. There was a wild look of recognition in his eyes which startled me, in spite of my knowledge of the frequently strange fancies and behaviour of the dying, which I had had abundant opportunities of observing on battlefields and in hospitals.

"The sick man closed his eyes and slowly passed his withered hands over his face; then he looked at me again with the same intelligence as before and said, almost in his old, strong, natural voice, 'Jim Willard!—I—am—Gordon

Maxwell!' I laid the lamp on the table, with the sort of care we use when handling something very fragile, lest we let it fall. I felt certain that I was going to faint, a thing I had never done in my life. He put out his great bony hand towards me; 'Willard,' he panted, 'I did not die as reported. I was picked up next day with the broken bayonet through my body, and, to my woe and suffering all these years, I was nursed back into such miserable life as a man can have, with only a fragment of lung left!' Here he paused for some minutes to recover a bit, then continued: 'I was not completely ruined financially, as most others were; I realized enough from the wreck of the plantation to buy a small life annuity. I have wandered from place to place in search of life, until here I am run to earth at last, dying like a rat in a hole!'

"He lay with closed eyes, and so absolutely still after the exertion of speaking, that I felt sure he was dead. But in a little while he whispered, without opening his eyes: 'All are dead! The Colonel—my mother and father! —Mildred!—All! All! Why are *you* not dead?' As he said this the door opened and the doctor and a sister of mercy came in with-

out speaking a word, and stood with me by the dying man's bed. The nun's face was completely concealed by her hood, but by the unerring telepathy of the heart I knew she was my cousin Mildred!

"Gordon lay with closed eyes, and slowly moving his head from side to side, as a man will do sometimes when thinking far-off, sad thoughts, he said: 'Why don't you answer me, Willard?' opening his eyes and feebly turning his face to the light. For a little while he did not seem to recognize any one, and murmured again: 'Why don't you answer me?' Then his eyes dilated with clear, unclouded consciousness. He threw out his hands, and with his old, strong voice cried: 'Mildred! Mildred! At last! At last!—Oh, thank God! Thank God! you have come to take me back with you to Paradise.' In a moment she had dashed her nun's hood aside and was kneeling by the couch, kissing his hands, and wildly whispering words of endearment, such as I thought it was well worth dying to hear! 'Darling! darling! I never knew! Jim lied to me! Telling me you were dead—and so I hid myself in the convent. Oh! how cruel—cruel!'

"'No! No!' said Gordon. 'Jim told you the

truth! *I was dead!* but the doctors dragged me back to half life, for which I have cursed them ever since. But *now* I thank them from the depths of my soul!' He struggled a moment with the rattle in his throat, then clear and high, 'Dear God!—Take me—where—mother—and father—Mildred—the Colonel—and—Jim are —all—to be—for—Christ's sake!—Amen!'

"The doctor stepped forward to compose the dead man's features, not noticing that Mildred had sank to the ground, in a swoon, as I thought. I lifted her on to a rude wooden sofa, and in doing so I saw a stain of blood on her lips, and a deathly paleness on her face. The doctor's accustomed touch on her wrist and heart revealed in a moment that two souls had taken flight from the darkness of the cave, and the greater darkness of this world!"

"I am afraid that I have detained you too long in this cold place," said Willard, gathering up our shawls. "Let us get into the sunlight as quickly as we can." So we reverently and silently left the little stone ruin, with its two low, almost invisible, mounds; thinking, as we had often thought before, how utterly incomprehensible are the mysteries of this life!—mysteries which must ever remain mysteries to us,

until we read the whole marvellous story by "the light that never was on sea or land."

In the meantime there is only the one, calm, safe anchorage for our bewildered, weary souls, and limited human understanding—if we would retain our reason—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

MIST

MIST

WHILE my companion is writing about Lake St. John, I may as well relate a sad romantic little affair which happened to me, or rather happened in my presence, near the northern shore of the lake.

Lake St. John is a beautiful sheet of water lying about one hundred and thirty miles almost due north of Quebec, with which it is connected by a fairly good railroad, built a few years ago. The village of Roberville, situated on the southern shore of the lake, is quite a pleasant place to pass a few weeks at. There is splendid fishing on the lake. The Owinenishi—a species of salmon trout—is a very fine game fish, and affords great sport to any disciple of Izaak Walton who may chance to wander hither. The lake is about a hundred miles (I write

more from memory than guide books) in circumference. Several streams of considerable size flow into it, and one noble river—the Saguenay — carries a vast volume of water from the eastern shore of the lake down to the St. Lawrence.

When I last saw Roberville it was a picturesquely situated village of a few hundred inhabitants, who were mostly of the slow old-fashioned French Canadian stock. There was the usual busy saw-mill, which is found in all frontier towns in the north or north-west, a few stores, a comfortable hotel, and last, but by no means least, a pretty little Roman Catholic Church, which I was pleased to find on Sunday well filled, not only by women, who are church-goers in all communities as a rule, but by the men also. A few miles westerly of Roberville, on the shore of the lake, lay the Indian village. It, too, had its little church, into which a solemn, yet pleasant-mannered old Indian used to usher us, and then quietly and reverently show us the simple little holy relics and vessels, lovingly and carefully kept under lock and key. The Hudson Bay Company's store stood here, very much decayed now in wealth and power from what such places were in the good old days

when the Company's name was a talisman to conjure by from Labrador to Vancouver.

While I was loitering the time away about Roberville, in the lovely Indian summer of 189–, I chanced to run across a man I had not seen for ten long years. Jack Ogilvie and I were born in the same village, had been schoolmates for many a weary year, and had comforted each other after many a severe flogging, our Dominie being one of the stern sort who thoroughly believed in the old proverb, "The rod and reproof give wisdom." I was four years older than Jack, and had fought many a tough battle on his account; and on the principle, "dear is the helpless creature we defend," our friendship had grown into more than mere boyish liking, and we had never ceased to have a sincere affection for each other. But in the strange jumble that we call life, Jack and I had lost sight of each other. He got a commission in a regiment of foot; I had gone to the Australian colonies and wandered about the world, seeing a great deal of life, both savage and civilized. As often happens with men—rarely with women—we had never corresponded; and, in fact, had completely lost trace of each other; when, strange to say, as

the little local train ran into the Roberville station, who should jump out of the single passenger car, and almost knock me over, but my old friend Jack!

Ten years is a wide swath out of a man's life, and if we are parted from our nearest and dearest for that length of time, we are apt to be considerably startled at the changes which have taken place. Jack was a thin slip of a lad when we said our sad farewell that autumn morning on the deck of H.B.M. troopship Ranger, bound for Bombay. Now he was a bronzed, soldierly-looking man of thirty, utterly changed, and yet—what strange beings we are! —not changed a bit! I knew him at a glance, and after a moment of dumbfounded amazement he found me in the wonderful archives of memory. In an instant we were boys again, and rushed at each other as in the old, happy days.

His presence at Roberville was soon explained. He had been wounded in one of our little affairs up-country at the Cape; had also had a long spell of fever on the Durban frontier, and, much to his regret (for there was active service going on, and therefore good chances of promotion), was obliged to ask for leave

of absence. Being a favourite with General W——, he got a whole year on full pay. Some years after leaving India, and before going to the Cape, Jack had been stationed at Quebec, and had taken a liking to the wild, romantic life of the north-west. Besides this, in his run-down condition he longed for the cool shimmer of the Lakes and the wild rush of the glorious rivers of Canada after two years of the brown veldts of South Africa.

That was Jack's whole story. As for myself, I had drifted to Lake St. John with no definite purpose, and when Jack proposed a trip into the real forest, with hunting and fishing in true *voyageur* style, I jumped at the proposal at once; and in the excitement of preparing for our life in the wilderness we were as happy and light-hearted as ever we had been on Lochaber in the old days which we both remembered so well. I have a fixed idea that Scotchmen remember their boyhood days with more tender feeling and far more vividly than men of any other nationality. It may be a wrong impression, but I have it nevertheless.

After much cogitation we decided to engage two Indians and two canoes. Jack and I could handle any kind of oar or paddle that ever was

invented, and we had had enough experience of the so-called savage man—Jack in the East, I in the Pacific—to know that two are much more easily managed, and are much more contented, than a greater number. We hired two birch-bark canoes with their respective owners; canoe and man to be paid forty dollars a month. Nominally the men were to feed themselves; practically we knew that we would have to feed them, but diplomatically this is a good stroke of policy, as it is always better to do more than is actually called for by the letter of the contract.

Our canoes were rather over the usual size, and carried safely about 800 lb. of freight, besides two men. Jack took charge of one, I of the other, each with an Indian.

They were men of the usual frontier type, but less contaminated by contact with civilization—save the mark!—than most of the redskins one finds near the settlements. Jack called his chap the "Artful Dodger," from a fancied resemblance between him and the classical original. My fellow I dubbed "Chingagook." I am more poetical than Jack, and I was determined to get all the poetry out of this trip that I could—in names, or anything else.

The foregoing sentiment was scribbled in my notebook before we started; I had not the heart to write so *after* my return, for I got a great deal more poetry out of that adventure than I bargained for.

We started from Roberville on the 10th of June about 5 a.m. We had made our arrangements so quietly that hardly any one knew of our departure. During our week of preparation we had been fortunate enough to meet one of the Trappist monks, whose monastery is on the Mistassinie river. He had come to Roberville on some business connected with his Order, had heard of our intended expedition, and asked to be allowed to accompany us as far as his station. We acceded to his request at once, not only on account of much good advice he had given us regarding the wilderness, but also because we felt deeply interested in the men who held the very outpost of civilization in that part of the world.

It was an ideal morning, clear and still, with that sweet stillness of the far north as if all Nature were at rest and enjoying the glorious Indian summer. The lake lay like burnished silver, with cat's paws slightly rippling the water here and there as if to enhance the won-

derful beauty of the shimmering expanse. We spun along at a good rate, past the headland at the Indian village and the Hudson Bay Company Post. I led the way with Chingagook in the stern, I in the bow. Jack followed with the Artful Dodger steering, the priest amidships, and Jack in the bow handling his paddle as if to the manner born. We had taken some short expeditions with our men before we made our final start, and had got upon the most friendly terms with them, and had become quite familiar with the management of the canoes.

Jack took the priest with him as he could talk French. Both our Indians spoke a little broken English, and could jabber a bit in the usual French *patois*. But your so-called savage man can understand you ten times better than white men do when you run up against the barrier of unknown tongues.

It is a long while since that fair June morning, and many things of good and bad import have happened since then, but I remember every detail and circumstance as if it had been yesterday—the glassy lake, the wooded shores, our paddles flashing in the sun, and the water rippling away from our canoes. Here and there the eye was caught by a silvery glitter and

splash as a game strong Owinenishi leapt into the sunlight and fell back into the water; while on shore the blue smoke rose straight up above the Indian wigwams, and floating over the still lake came the subdued tones of the bell from the little Catholic chapel in the village, calling the people to prayer.

We stretched away along the western shore, and made such good progress that we camped that night near the Chomouchouan river; after that we took it more leisurely, and landed our Trappist friend at his lonely post on the third day after leaving Roberville. To our worldly eyes it is indeed a lonely sad life which these monks lead, far from friends and country, yet they seem perfectly happy and contented. The Trappist Order is celebrated among the religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church for its extraordinary austerities and simplicity of life. It was founded in the twelfth century, and members are to be found all over the world. I have met the monks of this Order in the most savage and remote, as well as in the most civilized, lands.

The rules and discipline of the Trappists are of the most severe kind. The monks are forbidden the use of meat, and practise the utmost

simplicity of life. Bread and vegetables, a little fruit and water, make up their frugal bill of fare. They are great workers, and devote most of each day to manual labour. One of their rules which they observe very strictly is silence. They never speak unless it is absolutely necessary, and they say that this rule conduces greatly to contentment, to kindly feeling towards each other, and to general happiness.

I remember a priest of this Order, with whom I foregathered in Rome many years ago, and with whom I became very friendly, telling me that although he had been a zealous and successful Curé in a beautiful province of Normandy—his native country—yet he had never known peace of mind, or any approach to happiness until he became a strict member of the Trappist Order. They evidently agree with St. James: "The tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison"; and I am rather inclined to think they are right in their diagnosis of that most troublesome member.

After a couple of days spent with the good Fathers, and some explorations of the river, we concluded to return to a pretty little clearing near the lake, which *Père Lucien* had advised

us to look at as he thought it would suit our purpose. We found the place exactly adapted for a hunting camp—high dry ground for the tents, a good beach for the canoes, and a splendid situation for lake or river fishing. The forest was open, affording shelter from the noonday sun without having the dense character of most of the north-west.

We built a snug camp, and arranged everything in first-rate style. Both Jack and I knew the art of camp building to perfection, and we soon had everything ship-shape and to our entire satisfaction. The Artful Dodger and Chingagook were dumbfounded at our knowledge, and from that day forth paid us much more grave respect and consideration. To command the respect of savages two things are absolutely necessary. First and always, gentlemanly conduct, secondly, a knowledge of what (for want of a better word) we may term wood-craft. With regard to the first quality, they are quicker, as a rule, in detecting an underbred man than any committee of a West-end club. I suppose it is instinct or intuition, but whatever it may be, there it is, and you will find the same unerring gift all over the world among the children of Nature. As for the wood-craft, it

is more easily accounted for, as it is the first essential of the savage man's education.

In summer, throughout the great north-west, upon the shores of the lakes, near rivers and other convenient spots, Indians are found in temporary camps quite different from their permanent winter quarters. They are engaged in hunting, fishing, canoe-building, and all such business and recreation as go to make up Indian life. They are generally in small parties, or even single families. After we had been settled in camp a few days, we had a visit from a family which we found were located a few miles up the river. The party consisted of the father and mother, a daughter and son.

We learned that there was another member of the family in the shape of the grandmother, but as she was too old to care much about society, she did not honour us with a visit. The family were above the average redskins in regard to good looks: and two (the father and daughter) were strikingly handsome. The man was fully six feet in height, with a splendid physique, not too slim as Indians are apt to be when tall, and yet without a pound of surplus flesh. His features were fine, and he possessed the keen eagle eyes of his race. His every

movement had the free yet self-restrained grace of the sons of the wilderness wherever found all the world over, until they are made awkward and commonplace by imitating our manners and adopting our clothing.

The daughter was worthy of such a sire. She possessed all the grace of her father, and also had the peculiar wistful beauty which is often seen in Indian girls from twelve to eighteen years of age, rarely later; for the severe life of the poor squaw soon changes the girl into the hard-featured middle-aged woman.

The family had some trifles for sale—bead-work moccasins, deer-skin jackets, leggings, etc., and a basket of delicious wild strawberries. I bought the fruit, and Jack negotiated with the girl for a pair of moccasins. During our intercourse we learned that the Indian's name was Eagle Eye; and if ever a mother hit upon an appropriate cognomen for her son, that Indian's mother had "filled the bill." His wife bore the euphonious name of Bending-ash. These two names we translated and picked up readily enough, but the girl's patronymic we could not put into English, French, or any other lingo we even had a smattering of. The first part was simply "Mistassinie," then followed two

or three very hard syllables which we gave up in despair, greatly to the whole party's amusement. Jack, however, finally hit upon a happy compromise by proposing to address our fair young friend by the first syllable "Mist"; and after a little pouting on the part of the young lady herself, and a flash or two from her father, the whole thing was settled to every one's entire satisfaction. Those who know how sensitive Indians are, will understand how important it is to commence a friendship with the greatest delicacy as to names and titles of rank. The son was a smart lad of about twelve. His name was simple and easy to learn as he carried it on his head, as one might say, being simply a "Crow's-feather," stuck jauntily in his hair. With regard to our own names, the Indians settled the matter in no time. From some little supposed generous action on my part, they dubbed me "Open-hand." Jack, whose tall handsome figure they admired with intense appreciation, they named "Mountain-cedar," and so during four happy months we flourished as new men altogether.

The Indian camp was situated about three miles above us, and the river being deep and free from obstructions it only took about forty

minutes to paddle from their camp to ours. This was a matter of some consequence to us in many ways. Wild strawberries, for instance, were an endless article of trade between Mist and ourselves. Our Indians were always too busy to attend to such trifles, the real truth being that gathering berries is a thing the noble red man hates and despises as something quite beneath his dignity; and therefore leaves it entirely to the squaws and children. Mist took to the business of supplying us with the delicious little fruit with great goodwill. She, with Crow's-feather as assistant, brought us a pretty basketful every second morning, for which we settled up accounts at the end of the week; and as the children came faithfully and gave good measure, Jack and I agreed that we would make each a little present on pay day, over and above the stipulated price which we knew went into a general fund to replenish the family exchequer, whereas a present according to Indian ethics is held to belong sacredly to the recipient.

For Mist the present usually consisted of a bit of gay ribbon, a reel of coloured thread, a bright handkerchief, or some similar trifle. Of these we had plenty, having laid in a supply of such articles knowing they would be useful, as

they are always dear to the Indian woman's heart. A few fish-hooks, a knife, a leather belt or the like, would make the boy supremely happy, both in the secure possession of the treasure and in anticipation of splendid things yet to come.

I like to linger over this part of my little story, for there was then no sign of any trouble or sorrow befalling us in our happy careless life. But, alas! Job's sad soliloquy is as true now as it was in his day. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward," and there is no spot on earth, or station of life where we can escape our fatal inheritance, for "the trail of the serpent is over them all."

For nearly three months our life was simply perfect. We fished and hunted, made long expeditions up the river, and on the lake; or in lazy fits spent whole days in camp, reading, yarning, or in the luxury of utter laziness.

Then we made botanical collections of such plants as interested us, and in this work we had an enthusiastic assistant in Mist. She knew where to find the various plants we were in search of, and spent hours in camp giving us their Indian names. It was on one of these expeditions that the first chapter of the tragedy

opened, or rather the first chapter that was visible to my eyes.

On a still September morning—that loveliest time of the Indian year when the forest is aglow with all the gorgeous autumn colours, and Nature is sleeping in a voluptuous dream—Jack and I started up the river on a plant-hunting trip. We picked up Mist and Crow's-feather at their camp, and so, a merry party, we paddled away up to a suitable spot in search of some specimens of a rare fern which our Trappist friend thought we might find in those parts. We had brought our rifles along, as men always do in the wilderness; but not thinking so much of sport as of the plant we were anxious to find, we left them in the canoe, and only carried hunting-knife and tomahawk in our belts. We scattered about here and there hidden by the dense forest, but calling to each other every few minutes to find our bearings. Presently in a cliff beyond my reach I discovered a fine specimen of the coveted fern. Calling to the others to apprise them of my success, I sat down on a fallen tree to contrive some means of securing my prize.

At that moment a wild cry rang and echoed through the forest. I knew at once that the

cry came from Mist. The clear, shrill note could only be made by an Indian woman's voice, and I knew there must be some dire cause for such a wailing shriek of rage and horror. I did not wait an instant—as we are apt to do in such circumstances—but dashed at once with all the speed possible in the direction of the cry. In a direct line I had to go about a quarter of a mile, and in an ordinary forest path I would have covered the ground in five minutes, but my way was so impeded by rocks and fallen trees that I must have been fully a quarter of an hour before reaching my companions.

Then on the edge of a little clearing I suddenly came upon a scene which at first glance I could not understand, but in a minute I knew the whole story. Mist knelt by Jack, and in a most workmanlike manner was binding up his arm with part of her own dress and a gay handkerchief which that morning she had worn round her neck. Jack lay perfectly still, and so deadly pale that I thought at first he was dead. A few yards beyond, a great black bear was stretched at full length, with his ugly wicked eyes glazed in death, and his heart's blood slowly oozing from his cruel mouth. One glance at the monster showed that there was no more danger

to be apprehended from him. A well-directed thrust from Jack's hunting-knife—the knife was still in the wound—had gone straight to the savage heart, and must have killed him on the instant.

It is a phenomenon of our nature how quickly in moments of excitement we comprehend a whole situation which in ordinary circumstances we would require a long explanation to understand. I knew at once that the bear must have taken Jack completely unawares, and that it must have been Mist who struck the well-directed blow at the brute's heart, for it was Jack's right arm which was hurt, and a bear never lets go until he or his antagonist is killed. I found afterwards, in talking the matter over, that my first conjecture was right; and Jack said that he never saw anything like the quick flash of his knife as Mist drew it from his belt and plunged it with such certain aim into Bruin's heart.

As I said, Mist was binding up Jack's arm, and even when I came on the scene she paid no attention whatever, but continued the operation as if there were only two people left in all the world. When I had satisfied myself that Jack had only fainted from the sudden shock

and severe pain of the great teeth meeting in his flesh—it was a wonder his arm was not broken—I set to work to assist in restoring him to consciousness. Crow's-feather had filled Jack's hunting-cap with cool, clear water from a stream near by, and was laving his temples in the most workmanlike manner, watching all the while with his grave young face and serious eyes for signs of returning life.

In a few minutes Jack drew a deep breath, opened his eyes, and in an instant—to the utter astonishment of us all—sprang to his feet and made a grab, in spite of his wounded arm, at where, in ordinary circumstances, his sword hilt would have been. It was evident that in the first rush of returning consciousness the poor fellow thought himself on the battlefield. It took but a few moments to comprehend and remember the whole affair, and then he quietly sat down and let Mist complete bandaging his arm. When the operation was finished to her entire satisfaction, she got all our handkerchiefs and odd bits of clothing, and with some large, stiff leaves made a most scientific sling to support the wounded arm. Then she examined her work carefully, made Jack drink a mouthful or two of water, and with a serious but a happy

look, said, "Good!"—folded her hands quietly, smiled, nodded to us all, and repeated the one word, which means so much when said by an Indian, "good."

Jack's colour began to return, and presently he looked a little like his old self. Soldiers, and even civilians who have knocked about the world much, and been in many scrapes and tight places, soon recover their equilibrium after the most narrow escapes. I congratulated Jack on his escape without broken bones, and praised Mist for her brave, prompt action, and skilful medical management of the case afterward. While I was speaking, Jack took the brave, little brown hands in his uninjured hand, and held them gently but firmly, and ah! how unresistingly the poor little hands lay there. Then, to my amazement and sorrow—for I had regarded her merely as a happy, careless child—I saw that look come into Mist's face, the look, I suppose, every man has seen once in his life—to his joy or his sorrow—in some woman's face. It is no matter, high-born dame or lowly peasant, or savage woman of the wilderness, that look is the same all the world over, and has been from the beginning; the look which tells that henceforth all her life is yielded up to the beloved,

the look of utter self-renunciation which has been the glory and the curse of woman since God spake her doom in the garden of Eden. Ah! my strong-minded ladies, who are babbling about so-called "woman's rights," go to, and argue it out with Him who said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." That has been your glory and your shame since the woeful day we lost Paradise. Every happy home in the land proves it. Every criminal court confirms it when the poor loving creature, with a black eye and disfigured face, pleads for the cowardly rascal who abuses her; and I have not the least doubt that you will be judged a thousand times more leniently than man, on account of this awful inheritance.

Jack was one of the most unselfish and kindly fellows in the world, and never gave pain intentionally to any human being in his life. I saw at once that he comprehended the whole little tragedy which was taking place in poor Mist's wild heart, and in a moment he made up his mind to change it to comedy. He shook Mist's hands in a jovial sort of way, and with a laugh that was not so jovial, poor fellow, he said: "Mist! you are a brave, good girl, and if it had not been for your clever use of my knife I

should have been in the happy hunting-grounds instead of Bruin yonder. The Open-hand and I will never forget you, Mist, and when we get back to Roberville we will send you such treasures of lovely ribbons and prints, and so many beautiful things that all the great chiefs between the Lakes and Hudson's Bay, hearing of your wealth and beauty, will come with canoe-loads of peltry and wampum to try and win the daughter of Eagle Eye for a bride." Mist whipped her hands away from him and sprang to her feet with a wild flash in her eyes. "Mist no want ribbons and things from Roberville! Mist hate great chief!" Then, with a sweep of her arm that was like a command, she continued: "Sun low, camp far, must go," and, springing into the forest, she led the way to the canoes, we following as fast as Jack's wounded arm would permit.

It was nearly sunset when we reached the canoes. We started briskly down stream, Mist and her brother paddling their canoe, with Jack sitting amidships in as easy a position as possible, I following close behind in ours.

The river glittered under a full, clear moon, and we saw our way as plainly as if it had been broad day. We reached camp in a little over an

hour. When we were safely landed, Mist and Crow's-feather sprang into their canoe again, and without a word or a sound, except the swish of their paddles, went out of sight like a flash up the river.

Our men had supper ready and were as lively as chipmunks. The evening, as a rule, is the time to see the unsophisticated children of Nature at their liveliest. It seems the natural time, especially in summer, to have fun, feasting, and talk. But that night we had very little inclination for anything but our blankets. Jack's arm was remarkably easy, owing, we found out afterwards, to the skilful manner in which Mist had dressed the wounds. She had used certain leaves and moss which the medicine-men apply to allay or prevent fever and promote healing. It was most wonderful how soon Jack recovered. His arm had been lacerated to the bone, and I rather think that under most medicos' scientific treatment he would have been laid up for months, and maybe it would have ended in the loss of his arm.

Mist came every morning to examine the progress of the cure. She and Chingagook took the case under their special care. For a week or so they did not permit the leaves and moss to be

removed, but every morning unwound the bandages, and, making them slightly damp with pure cold water from the river, replaced them carefully and rather loosely.

Day after day slipped past, and camp life fell into the old pleasant routine.

I was so thankful to see Jack getting over his hurt so well (I had feared that poison from the bear's fangs might develop into something serious), that it made me less quick-witted than I ought to have been to see another danger developing before my very eyes. I spent my time hunting, fishing, and exploring the country generally, with one of our Indians. Jack, of course, stayed in camp. In a couple of weeks he was so far recovered that he could amuse himself sketching; luckily he had the knack of holding a pen or a brush almost as well with his left hand as his right. When he tired of sketching he betook himself to bossing the culinary business, or doing a little fishing on the lake, with Mist and Crow's-feather to paddle him about.

I know now that I was dreadfully to blame in not taking warning by the vivid picture I had got of poor Mist's feelings on the day of the accident. But I was so thankful, as I said, to

see Jack recovering steadily day by day, and I was so afraid of the fatigue of travelling bringing on fever; moreover, things seemed to be going on in such a prosaic way, that I willingly forgot what I had seen, or rather, tried to think of it as only a flash in the pan which had expended itself in a moment, or had died a natural death from Jack's cool manner of taking it.

Six weeks of this sort of life passed away like "a tale that is told," as David remarked in one of his many sorrowful moods. The glorious autumn days were visibly shortening, reminding us only too plainly that summer was gone, and the Ice-king preparing to take his annual pilgrimage southward.

Jack was now like his old self again. The wound was quite healed up, and save for a little weakness, which time only could cure, his arm was out of all danger. So the pleasant days went slipping past, as pleasant days have a knack of doing; and with the usual way that human beings have of avoiding disagreeable subjects, we hardly ever spoke of breaking up camp, and of the ending of our pleasant "dolce far niente" life. But at last the subject could be delayed no longer. Jack had no more than time to make his long voyage to the Cape be-

fore his furlough would expire, and our bush life had far exceeded the time I had originally intended. So, as disagreeable things are usually done in haste at last, we held a hurried consultation one morning after breakfast, and decided to break camp early next day and make a start for Roberville.

The settlement of the question was a relief to us both, but somehow it cast a gloom over that bright autumn day far greater than the simple circumstance of breaking up a summer camp—however pleasant that camp had been—seemed to warrant. Even our Indians were depressed, and instead of appearing glad at the prospect of returning to their lodge with a nice little pile of bright silver dollars (which would represent luxuries galore from the Hudson Bay Company's Store during all the winter), they looked more like men who were undertaking some melancholy expedition. We busied ourselves with the hundred and odd things which are always to be done when people are leaving a place where they have sojourned for any length of time, be it hut or palace.

Jack had an unfinished sketch of our camp on hand, and in the afternoon he sat down to give it a few last touches. I was oiling our

rifles and putting them in their cases. The Indians were packing the small articles here and there, to have everything ready for an early morning start. Just then Mist and her brother came dashing down the river, keeping time with their paddles to a *voyageur's* boat-song, which echoed wild and sweet in the forest. It was a pretty sight, and cheered us up to see them in such high spirits. Jack caught the situation in a moment, and, calling to them to remain still for a little while, with a few masterly strokes of his brush he transferred the living picture to the canvas, which gave it a human lifelike interest that it lacked before. The canoe was within thirty or forty feet of where Jack was sitting, and he caught the features of the boy and girl in a wonderfully clever and artistic manner, while the warm glow of the afternooon sun was on their faces and bare arms. I have not seen that sketch for many a year, and the subject is too painful for me ever to wish to see it again; but I remember every detail of it to-day as well as I remember my mother's face. Mist leaped on shore and came up to us with the glory of youth and health and happiness expressed on every feature and in every motion of her lithe young form. "Well, Mist!" cried

Jack, "you just came in time; my picture is finished; I will never touch it again. Look at it yourself, Mist; is it not your shadow?" She looked at it long and intently. Then she looked at the camp, and at the preparations going on. Of course, in a moment she knew we were preparing to depart. A dark shadow came over her face, its expression utterly changed, and she looked old and haggard!

I never saw anything like it, and it struck me with a strange thrill of horror. As for Jack he seemed dazed by the weird look of the girl, and stood with the picture in his hand, never saying a word. Mist was the first to break the silence in a strained, low tone, quite different from her own sweet musical voice. She spoke in the French *patois* which she always used when with us. "Mountain-cedar and Open-hand are going away never to return!" she said. "They have had a happy summer, and they are returning to their lodges before winter comes from the north and drives the sun far away to the south. It is well! The pale-faces are great and rich and wise! They have many things to do, and many friends to love! The Indian is poor and mean and foolish, and has very little to love! But"—here the poor wild

thing drew herself up to her full height, and looked Jack straight in the face with a look of pathos, such as I have seen on children's faces under some great trial, and in the eyes of animals when they knew their fate had come—"but the Indian has one gift; a heart that never forgets! Farewell! Mist will follow you; farewell!" She turned and leaped into the canoe from which her brother had not stirred, and with a few quick powerful strokes of their paddles they were gone!

Our Indians, who had heard every word but remained perfectly silent and motionless, with inscrutable faces, now rose with a muttered word or two, and proceeded, with much greater celerity than is usual with their race—to whom time never seems to be of the least importance—to get everything ready for a start. When their preparations were complete, to my great surprise they were anxious to start at once, although it was within two hours of sunset, and a voyage across the lake on a moonless night was by no means a pleasant prospect for an Indian. Jack seemed to agree with them, but I was strongly opposed to risk a night voyage on the lake in our frail crafts. If we struck straight across the lake for Roberville and encountered a stiff breeze, we

ran a great chance of foundering with our deeply laden canoes, and if we coasted along the shore we might run on a half-submerged rock and get capsized, an experience I have had with canoes in various parts of the world when cruising about rivers and lakes by night. With much reluctance I got them at last to postpone the start till daybreak. With this understanding, after a hasty supper and a very cheerless pipe of tobacco, we rolled ourselves in our blankets and pretended to sleep.

I say pretended, because I know that neither Jack nor I slept one wink all that dreary night; and I rather think, from a few whispered words which I heard now and then, that our Indians did not fare much better. Our tent was the only one left standing; the others had been struck and stowed away on the canoes. The Indians lay just outside our door, for the reason, as I think now, that they knew by instinct that some catastrophe was in the air.

It was between two and three o'clock in the morning—the most dreary time of darkness, a time, the Indians say, the spirit world is nearest to us, and the hour, as statistics show, in which the largest percentage of people die—that there suddenly burst upon our ears a strange unearthly

chant which struck a chill to my heart such as I never felt before!

I have faced death in many forms by land and sea. I have seen and heard some ghastly things in my time. But never before did "an horror of great darkness" take such a hold of me as at that moment. I grasped Jack's arm, he was trembling violently and was beginning to rise. Without knowing very well my reason for doing so, I quietly pressed him back and whispered to him to lie still; but he paid no heed to me. Then suddenly the Indians perceived his intention, and with arms like bars of steel forced him back on his blankets. "Hush!" they hissed through their shut teeth. "No Indian woman! Indian spirit! Hush!" And so we lay quite still listening to the awful dirge, which continued for perhaps ten minutes and then ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

The longest three hours I ever spent were from then to daybreak. There was never another sound, not a leaf fluttered to the ground, not a ripple broke upon the river bank. It seemed as if all life had ceased, and that some dreadful calamity was impending. It was something like the stillness I have experienced in the tropics just before a hurricane on the sea,

or an earthquake upon the land, when Nature seems to be hushed in a sort of stupor. At last daylight broke, and we rose slowly and wearily like men who had gone through some horrible torture. Our canoes having been loaded the previous evening, all we had to do was to roll up our blankets and tent and embark.

Our birch-bark canoes were—thanks to our Indians' good care of them—perfectly water-tight, and when they were loaded overnight we had anchored them just clear of the bank to be ready for an early start. Jack's canoe was outside of mine, so he and the Artful Dodger had to pass over my canoe to reach theirs. Both canoes lay parallel with the bank, and as they were pretty deeply laden, Jack and his man had to creep very carefully into their places before they unmoored. A birch-bark canoe is a ticklish thing to handle, and I was carefully getting into my place in the bow and preparing to cast off when I heard a low cry from Jack's man. In my nervous state from the effects of the past sleepless night, the cry set me trembling in a miserable manner, and I leapt ashore in an actual state of terror. I saw that the Indian was slowly turning the canoe to the bank, while Jack held something which was float-

ing alongside. Great God! another moment and I knew the terrible truth. It was Mist who was floating there, firmly grasping in her cold, dead hand, the mooring-line of Jack's canoe. They lifted her tenderly on to the bank, and then tried to unclasp her hand; but it was firm as a vice, and the only thing they could do was to cut the rope and leave the piece in her poor loving grasp! She had evidently attired herself in her gayest apparel; a beautiful skirt of embroidered buckskin, with leggings and little beaded moccasins. Her hair was loose and fell round her to the waist; her face was perfectly calm and placid, with a *faint* smile upon the silent lips.

Jack sat down beside the dead girl, and I never saw such a sudden change in a man. He looked ten years older since the day before. I whispered to him, but he paid no attention whatever. After a little reflection I decided to send the Indians off to Eagle Eye's camp to apprise him of his child's fate. They started at once, and I sat down beside Jack to watch over *our dead*, as I could not help calling poor Mist. For the hour and a half that the Indians were gone we did not speak a word. Sooner than I expected the canoes came gliding silently back.

Not a word was spoken. The father, silent, calm, and stern, lifted Mist into his canoe, and apparently without seeing us, he glided slowly away with his sad freight, never uttering a word or a sound or making a gesture of recognition of any kind whatever.

We started on our voyage to Roberville at once. We struck straight across the lake, and reached the village without incident. We paid off our men, and gave each a handsome *douceur*. But instead of a merry closing to our long good comradeship, we parted sadly, silently, hurriedly, like men who feared to look in each other's faces. Jack and I took the train next morning for Quebec, where he caught a steamer for England, and I took the overland train for Vancouver.

During the last few days we were together we never mentioned Mist's name; and, in numerous letters I have had from Jack since we parted, he has not once referred to our four months' camping in the wilds of the north-west.

MARK WYNYARD'S STORY

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Chapter I

IT was a day of such awful heat and dust as I verily believe can only be found in Melbourne—and I have been in some rather dusty spots of the world. The Sahara in a simoom, Sydney in a "brickfielder," the Rakaia in a nor'-wester, Ismalia in an equinox, Santa Anna valley, California in a "norther," etc., etc. But I must say that Melbourne easily takes the cake when she sets to work to give the *true* "norther" from the sun-scorched interior, say, any time in the month of November. The time I refer to was a week after Cup-day, the 10th of November, 189–. Business, which had been interrupted by the holidays, was again in

full swing, that is, in such full swing as the dreadful heat would permit.

I was, as usual, on a wandering tour of uncertain length and destination, and had foolishly (as I thought in all that Gehenna of heat and dust) tarried in Melbourne for a week to see the event which sets all these Colonials wild with excitement. I say advisedly *all*, for from the Governor down to the smallest newspaper ragamuffin, from the most sedate *mater* to the trim little shop girl, not only do they lose their heads, but what is more, lose their money also. Who wins is a mystery. I have never met any one who admitted to winning a cent. I had gone to Flemington, of course, and seen the great race. Three thousand guineas is a heap of money, and there is a lot of spending power in such a sum, as Thackeray said. But the stakes (large as they were) did not, I feel sure, represent one-twentieth of the actual amount which changed hands on that fiercely hot day. There were more than a hundred thousand people on the course, and I should judge by what I saw and heard (and I watched them pretty closely) that at least two-thirds of them staked their shekels freely. Of course, like all who go for "a dead sure thing" with bookmakers, ninety-

nine out of a hundred lost their money; so like the rest of race meetings which I have attended in various parts of the world (more to study the people than the horses) it was a much sadder lot I returned with in the afternoon than I journeyed with in the morning.

As I said, I was wandering about Melbourne one intensely hot day a week or so after Cup-day. It was blowing a real "norther," the dust so thick that I could not see a block ahead of me. At last I found myself in the neighbourhood of the Law Courts in Lonsdale Street. In looking into the wide hall-way of the spacious building everything seemed so cool and quiet in comparison with the racket and heat outside; the spick-and-span policeman, so impervious to heat and weariness, so far above the wretched feeling, *Is life worth living?* that I at once entered, and smiled upon the guardian of the law as if we were old friends, as indeed was the case, in a manner, for I look upon all British policemen—from Hyde Park Corner to the furthest sand-spit where the old flag flies—as my friends.

I never, when in sore need, asked one of the noble, brave fraternity a question, or kept close to his side in abject terror in the awful

confusion of a city crossing, but I was treated with perfect respect and kindness, not to say fatherly tenderness and protection.

But to return to the Law Courts, and the 105° Fahrenheit of Lonsdale Street. I did not know when I entered the spacious, cool building and saluted my friend, the guardian of the law, that there was an important case being tried that particular 10th of November, or rather being concluded that day; a great murder case, as the constable informed me, which had occupied the court for over a week, and which had excited much interest in the city.

My friend whispered "That the Judge was preparing to sum up and deliver his charge to the jury." In the few minutes' pause of proceedings, he carefully opened the door of the room where the court was sitting, and showed me a seat where I would have a good view of judge and jury. I slipped into the silent room as quietly as I knew how, but the judge had me fixed with his eagle eye before I could get down, and I made sure that I would be ignominiously ejected. Everybody who was comfortably seated looked at me with that sort of self-righteous, indignant stare it is the custom of human creatures to assume when they get a

chance at one of their own kind in such a predicament.

The charge to the jury was short and very simple. "Gentlemen of the jury," said his lordship, slowly and solemnly, "the case is so simple and clear; the crime so atrocious, with no mitigating circumstances, that I really feel I need say nothing at all. The prisoner pleaded guilty to begin with, and, if it had not been for the truly able manner in which the prisoner's counsel has conducted the defence, I should have felt myself justified in submitting the case to you four days ago." Here the prisoner's counsel made a little jerky bow to the judge, just as if he were a cleverly constructed automaton, which I really believe lawyers become after a certain age. "Gentlemen," proceeded the judge, "I think there is only *one* verdict which you can render. You may now retire!"

The twelve good men and true promptly availed themself of the judge's permission, while his lordship trotted off to his retiring room for, I presume, that refreshment which the unfortunate jurymen were denied. Thus, attention having been completely diverted from me, I gradually recovered my self-possession, which had been sorely disturbed by the supercilious

looks of my fellow creatures, and their openly displayed disappointment that I was not bundled out neck-and-crop. So I plucked up courage by degrees, and slowly took in the scene. I was surrounded by an English crowd of the usual look the world over. I mean that the people had that vacant sort of expression which is common to those who are waiting to have their opinions ready-made for them. The more volatile crowds of other nationalities will form their own opinion and freely express it, while the ponderous mind of the Englishman is stolidly waiting to be directed. No doubt it is a good quality in the main, and I suppose ingrained in the character by centuries of unquestioning obedience to law and order. A splendid characteristic in a people! Sorrow will befall us when we listen to the ill-conditioned demagogues who teach that breaking the law, instead of reforming the law, is the road to liberty.

In my first cursory glance round the court-room I had not taken much notice of the prisoner. He had sat down beside the constable when the judge and jury retired. Upon a silent admonition from his keeper, he again rose as his lordship entered and took his seat. The jury filed into their places, while there was a

sort of subdued whisper floating round the room, instantly repressed by the clerk's stern "silence!" And then there was a dead, painful stillness as all waited for the next move in the awful drama. "Gentlemen of the jury! are you agreed upon your verdict?" The white-haired old foreman arose and said, "Yes, your lordship." Then he had to clear his throat, as if the words he had prepared were sticking somewhere. "Yes, your lordship, we find the prisoner guilty of murder in the first degree." The foreman sat down, and there was a long, or what seemed to me a long pause, while the judge calmly arranged his glasses, glanced at his notes, and then stood up. Everybody in court did the same—just as if we had been in church—and, indeed, so strong was the impression, that I actually had the words in my mouth, "I believe in one God," when the solemn command, "Prisoner at the bar, stand up!" recalled me to my senses. I remember thinking at the time (such trifles are apt to enter the mind at the most tragic moments) that the command was superfluous, as the prisoner was and had been standing for some time. "Prisoner at the bar," continued the judge, "you have been found guilty by a jury of your countrymen of the

greatest crime that is known to human law, murder in the first degree. You have had a fair and most patient trial—have been defended by a clever, learned, and conscientious counsel; and I am sorry to say that the task must have been a very painful one to him, as there were no extenuating circumstances in your case, such as there are sometimes in such cases, happily for the honour of our poor fallen human nature. The jury have wisely refrained from making any remarks whatever. It, therefore, only remains for me to pronounce the final, awful, and perfectly just sentence of the law. But before I do so I will follow the usual custom in such cases, and ask if you have anything to say."

The prisoner seemed to awake, as from a half-dreaming state. He looked straight at the judge with clear, steady eyes, head thrown back, and shoulders braced, like a man relieved that a long, disagreeable business is over and done with. Then he said: "My lord, the sentence you are about to pronounce is absolutely just. It was impossible for an honest jury to find any other verdict. And I thank them for finding a just and manly verdict, without any maudlin recommendation to mercy, such

as might have consigned me to a life imprisonment. To go slowly mad behind iron bars, waking each morning from troubled dreams, perchance for many, many years (for I am still only in early middle life, though my hair is gray) would be much worse than death. I have no more to say, my lord, only,"—here he looked at his lawyer, and smiled—"only to thank my 'clever, learned, and conscientious Counsel,' for his strenuous efforts on my behalf, and to assure him that in this instance his failure is my success."

The judge and barrister exchanged glances, as much as to say, "this is a queer fish we have caught this time." For a little while the old judge seemed doubtful whether he ought not to call this *rara avis* to order, but considering, I suppose, that men in the prisoner's position have extra privileges, he contented himself by sternly regarding him for fully two minutes, which seemed two hours to me. Then he slowly and deliberately assumed the black cap, and proceeded to pronounce sentence. "Prisoner at the bar—" A wild cry of "Mark!" in a woman's voice, rang through the court room; then darkness and silence swept over my soul. Judge and jury, prisoner,

the crowd of staring faces, were gone! and I was somewhere—on the borderland of another world! When I came back the policeman who had befriended me before, was shaking me into consciousness, while whispering in my ear, "Keep still! man alive! or the judge will order you out, and give me a black mark, worse luck! Don't you know this is the best bit of all the trial? There are a score of gentlemen at the door who would give me a sovereign for your seat." I was still enough now, staring, like a man demented, at the prisoner, while the judge, after a moment's pause, and a scowl in my direction, proceeded with the sentence. "Mark Wynyard! the sentence of the court is, that you shall be taken hence to prison, and at the day and hour hereafter to be named, you shall be taken to the place of execution, and there hanged by the neck until you are dead, and may God have mercy on your soul!"

Again I felt a horror of great darkness blotting out all life and light, and I remember the thought which flashed through my mind, "If this is death, how bitter it is to die!" Then I found myself in the hall-way with the policeman, while a kindly-looking old man was holding a flask of whisky to my lips, at which I sputtered and

gasped. "That'll do 'e good, my friend!" were the first words I heard. "Poor gentleman! 'e 'asn't been used to 'ave the pleasure of attendin' court much, and when 'e saw the hold man aclappin' on the black cap it gave 'im a queer turn! It always does that. I mind the first time I see'd it myself. I almost lost my blessed dinner overboard, and I kind o' waggled in my seat. A sweet hold lady as saw my fix, she out with a nice flask o' gin, an' she smuggled it into my 'and, and says she, 'take a good swig, my dearie,' an' you bet I did, an' Lord love you! I was as right as a trivet in half a jiffy, an' enjoyed the last act o' 'The Lord 'ave mercy on your soul' as much as I 'ave done in all my life. Which is sayin' a good lot, for I've seen more than a 'undred coves get their through tickets in my time." I thanked my two friends, and was turning to go, when he of the whisky-cure belief said, holding out the flask, "Better take a thimble-full more, just to steady your pins; they're a bit wobbly yet." With a wave of my hand, meant to express my thanks, and trusting to air and exercise to steady my "wobbly pins," I went slowly out with the crowd—not only a different sort of being from what I was when I entered, but as if the world was another world

altogether, and the landmarks of life had all disappeared.

"Had I really heard aright? Did I hear that old man in a black cap condemn my friend, Mark Wynyard—my dearest boyhood's chum—to hang by the neck until he was dead! why the thing was preposterous. He—Mark Wynyard—Squire Wynyard's only son, the best boy in our school, the clever senior wrangler at Cambridge, the happy lad who never was in a scrape, or even a bad temper in his life, the friend of all, the enemy of none. No! No! the thing was out of the question! I had been ill with the wretched heat, and had dreamt a bad dream!"

I got back to my hotel as quickly as my shaky limbs would carry me, and endeavoured to partake of some luncheon, but my throat seemed to have lost the power of swallowing food, so I contented myself with a long drink of iced water, and then threw myself on my bed, and tried to think. To think! I found it a hopeless task. Was it all a wild delusion of a brooding mind, and a brain fevered by the infernal heat?

My passage ticket was available for the P. and O. mail boat sailing the following morning

for England. I resolved to pack my things at once, and get away from this wretched, unhealthy place! I remember, distinctly, how methodically I arranged my things for packing —a proceeding quite unusual with me; I generally ram my things into my trunks higgledy-piggledy, trusting to luck to find what I may require at a future time. While I was doing this, I knew perfectly well that it was for the purpose of concentrating my thoughts on the work of the moment, and keeping a door shut on that part of my mind which held the horror of the day.

It was a cowardly and cruel thing to think of running away, but there are moments in life when we are hardly responsible for our actions, let alone thoughts. However that may be, I am thankful to say that I was not permitted to carry out my weak intention of flight.

In the afternoon I went out, and in spite of the heat and dust, walked fast and far. When I returned I was thoroughly tired out, and ordering tea, prepared for bed. I drank my tea, and I distinctly remember smoking a cigar, and staring at the ceiling of the room, all the while sternly holding the door shut, in my mind, behind which I knew full well, my horror lay

ready to rush out and drive me mad, if I relaxed my vigilance for a moment.

After a while the waiter came to light the gas, and said that a Sister from the Convent of St. Silas wished to see me. "All right," I said, "show the lady up." If he had said that the Sultan wished to consult me upon the rearranging of his harem, I would not have been a bit more astonished. But I had got beyond all outward manifestation of surprise, so I calmly awaited my guest. The waiter ushered in a nun of the order of St. Francis. I set a chair for my visitor, closed the door, and taking a seat by the window, awaited the next act in this day of adventure. The nun's face was wholly concealed, but by her movements, in spite of the unbecoming dress, I inferred that she had not yet arrived at middle life, and I saw she was tall and handsome, with something in her slightest movements which were strangely familiar.

"Sir," said my visitor, in a voice that thrilled my heart like a note of once well-known music, but which we have not heard for many a year; yet I could not recall the speaker, for it was a voice which had passed out of my life ten busy and changeful years before; "of course, you

do not remember me, but I recognized you in the court room to-day when you fainted. I am, or rather I was, Mary Hawkins." "I know you now," I said, "by your voice, but I would not have recalled you otherwise. Even the subtle Jacob could not change his voice, though he so cleverly disguised all else." I fear I said this rather unfeelingly, as I had a dim sort of intuition that she was in some way responsible for Mark Wynyard's awful position. "You need not say anything about me," said the nun, in that strangely level, unimpassioned tone which women acquire when they have passed through some great catastrophe, and left all joy and hope in this world far in the dead past, "I did not come to speak to you about myself, but about *your friend*, and—*my—husband!*" She paused—crossed herself, and with a sound as if she were merely clearing her throat, but which was in reality a suppressed moan, she proceeded: "And to ask you if nothing can be done to save him in this dreadful extremity? I knew of his trial from my Father Confessor, who, of course, was aware of Mr. Wynyard's relation to myself, and that the dead man was the wrecker of our lives. My good Father Confessor advised me to banish all thought of the matter from my mind,

and avoid meeting any one who would recall the past; firstly, because it could not be of the slightest use, and, secondly, because I would only endanger my own soul. But although I knew that the good Father meant it all for my peace and comfort, yet, even at the risk of my peace and danger of my soul, I felt that a power which I could not resist impelled me to save Mark Wynyard from a dreadful fate, for which I—miserable, sinful woman that I am—was the cause! Hence my presence in court to-day, and my intrusion upon you now."

The lady, whom I had known in far-away Devon as Mary Hawkins, whom I had seen married to Mark Wynyard, and who was now Sister Mary, spoke in a strangely mechanical manner, as if she were reading a lesson in a language which she did not understand, and wished to finish as quickly as possible. After she ceased speaking we sat perfectly still. She seemed to be in a sort of swoon, while I was dazed and utterly dumbfounded by the position into which I had been so strangely plunged.

I said I would see Mr. Wynyard on the morrow, and try if there was any hope of a stay of justice until more facts could be brought to light. I intimated that I was surprised she had

not boldly faced all the misery of it, and, as a witness, told the cause of the murder, or rather of the killing, for if she had done so I did not think reasonable men could call it murder. The poor broken-hearted woman replied that she would have faced all the shame and horror, and fearlessly told the sad story in court, but she had not known anything of the matter until the previous night, and when she reached the court it was too late. "I tried to speak," she said, "but I could only cry his name, then I fainted and was taken out." She rose and thanked me, saying that she would come again on the following evening. I knew by her voice that she was quietly weeping, and as I thought that was the best thing she could do, I did not feel capable or inclined to offer any consolation; and when she gave me her hand I fear I took it very coldly. My thoughts were busy with the past, with the sorrow and ruin for which she, by her own admission, was the miserable cause, although how far willingly and responsibly only the merciful God knows!

Next morning, as early as officialdom deigns to move, I presented myself at the prison, and with the aid of some *golden salve* (which, by the way, I have never known to fail in any quarter

of the globe when properly applied), I obtained admission into Wynyard's cell.

I found him fast asleep on a narrow iron bedstead; all-standing, as the sailors say, that is, fully dressed. He had eaten his breakfast, the keeper told me, and had then gone off to sleep, although he had slept soundly all night. I had never actually seen such a case before, but the turnkey told me it was usual for condemned men to sleep and eat well up to the last. This fact the doctors—as a rule a parcel of humbugs, who know about as much of the psychical mystery of man's life as I do about the grave of Moses—attribute to a physical nervous theory of their own, but which is, no doubt, in reality a merciful gift of God to poor human nature, when brought into some supreme crisis of life or death.

As, of course, my visit was limited to a certain time, I asked the turnkey to waken my friend, which he did, and then very delicately, as I thought at the time, retired as far as the cell would allow, and seemed to become absorbed in a little book he produced from his pocket.

On awakening, Wynyard yawned and rubbed his eyes, saying quite coolly, "Is it time, constable? How quickly it has passed! I am in-

deed glad! The waiting was the only thing I dreaded." Then he saw and recognized me in a moment, although we had not looked in each other's faces for more than ten years!

I was best man at his marriage one morning just ten years before, and at four in the afternoon I sailed on the steamship Nile, bound for the West Indies. From that day Mark Wynyard and his affairs had passed entirely from my knowledge, but the regard and friendship always remained perfectly steadfast. Men-like, we never thought of letters. Our destinies moved in opposite directions, and, strange to say, our paths had never crossed before that miserable day, although each moment of those long years had been leading our unconscious footsteps nearer and nearer to this dire meeting.

Like most men who have been parted for many years, we did not waste much time in sentimental reminiscences. Women can indulge in this painful sort of pleasure, but men, with their less volatile and harder natures, become impatient under the process, and simply pass over such meetings with a few casual remarks about beards or no beards, sunburn or frost-bite, and such like; carefully bottling up sentiment altogether.

In a little while we were back on the old familiar terms, I freely asking him how he had got into that terrible scrape, and how he was to be extricated. For, sitting there with Mark Wynyard talking as in the old days, I could no more realize that he was a justly-condemned murderer than I could believe that I was dead, and life a vanished dream!

"Look here," he said, "I may just as well make a clean breast of it, and tell you the whole miserable story from first to last. Then you will see that it is impossible to change matters now, and that it would not be worth while to do so, even if it were possible! It will occupy some time to take even a cursory glance at events since you and I parted at the church door. But I know my friend here" (Wynyard addressed himself to the turnkey) "will kindly grant us all the time he can to have our last confab."

"Certainly, sir," said the officer, in a voice which showed that even he was deeply touched, "and," he continued, "if you wish to be together for an hour each day this week, I think I can arrange it." This we gladly accepted, and during many meetings Wynyard (lying on his narrow, prison bed, I reclining on a dilapidated

steamer chair, which our friend the jailer had fished out of some lumber room) related his adventures since our parting, word for word as follows. Of course, we talked on many other subjects, some sacredly private, others relative to his family, with which you, my reader, have nothing to do.

Chapter II

During all our intercourse Wynyard sternly silenced me (not so much in anger as in an irrevocable resolve to let the law take its course) whenever I attempted to suggest an appeal to the governor—the only possible appeal now available. I was in the helpless condition of knowing only too well, from his passionately expressed wishes, that if by any means I did get his sentence commuted to imprisonment, he would curse me bitterly until death came to his relief.

In his quiet old musical voice, as if he were telling me something disconnected with himself altogether, and in which he was only deeply interested, Wynyard began: "You remember *that* morning, of course?" and upon intimating that I did remember it very well, he continued:

"Yes, I thought you would. Well, let me see. Oh, yes! we all, excepting yourself, returned to *her* father's house for the wedding breakfast. You said good-bye at the church door, laughingly remarking that you had had enough of such sad events! In reality, of course, you had to hurry, as your steamer—the good old Nile, I remember very well—sailed at six p.m. from Southampton. So you had little enough time, and you made us all laugh most heartily by saying that you would get a sandwich at Victoria Station and eat it in the train, and that would be your nice little cosy wedding breakfast."

I was completely astounded that a man in the midst of such an awful tragedy could so easily recall and so coolly repeat mere trifles which had been lightly spoken some ten strangely sorrowful and adventurous years before. He continued just the same in all our intercourse; never in the least restless, nervous, or gloomy. On the contrary, he would intersperse his reminiscences with quaint bits of philosophy and trifling events, as if his mind and body were taking a long needed and much enjoyed rest, with a bright future before him instead of the dark shadow of death. I am not psychologist enough to give any explanation of this

state of mind in my poor friend. I can only say it was there, and remained very evident to the last day of his life.

"We all went to breakfast," he resumed, "and after the usual laughter, tears, and jokes of such occasions, my wife went off to change her wedding gown for a travelling costume. When she lightly touched me as she rose from table, *that* was the last I saw of her until yesterday in the court room! How—why—or wherefore she vanished, I know not! All I know is that she sailed from Gravesend next day with Lawrence Percival on the steamer Afric, bound for Melbourne.

"Of course it was that invaluable institution Scotland Yard which discovered this. Her father put the matter into the hands of the police after the first storm of grief and passion had subsided into a dazed sorrow and wonderment, which has continued ever since.

"Her father, Colonel Hawkins, went out to Melbourne, and found his daughter and Lawrence Percival living apparently happy, and certainly in good style, in a handsome villa at St. Kilda. The Colonel was a stern disciplinarian, and, what is rather unusual with disciplinarians, he could discipline himself as well

as others. He pulled himself together with a great effort, and without making himself known, returned at once to England, erased Mary's name from the family Bible, and forbade his wife and daughters ever to mention her name again.

"Then my nature changed! I hated the old life which I had loved so well, with its generations of family ties and traditions, and all the subtile associations which make England *home* for the wandering Briton, and his children after him, even though born beyond the seas. My father advised me to travel, and when I had recovered from the shock, through the efficacious treatment of the great physician, *Time*, to return and take up the position and duties to which I was born. So we parted, my father saying little, but hoping that the wonderful elasticity of youth and health would work my cure. But, as I said, my nature changed, and I grew like the wild creatures which leave the herd, seeking for shelter, hiding, and darkness when they are wounded to death.

"Having no objective point, I followed you to the West Indies, thinking that we might join forces and go into South America, which is the best country I know wherein to lose one's self.

I traced you through Barbados, Jamaica, and into Hayti. But I lost all trace of you in the Black Republic. I found that one carried one's life in one's hand in that fair island, which the nigger has made a veritable hell upon earth. I lingered awhile in Port au Prince—although I hated the place—but I had a strong hope that you were somewhere on the island. You remember saying when you left England that you would explore Hayti and find out if it was really as bad as Sir Spenser St. John in his book on the island makes out. Of course my search was a failure. I learned afterwards that you had gone into civilized lands in the north, and as that was exactly what I did not wish to do, I gave you up, and decided to *dree my weird* alone.

"Our Consul introduced me to the President, the Bishop, and others in good positions. In this way I saw a great deal of black high life, or rather *low* life, for the Hayti negro is about the worst species of the *genus homo* that I know —and I have seen quite a number of bad sorts. I went into the interior a goodish bit, much against the advice of the Consul, who bade me a pathetic sort of good-bye as if he were very doubtful of seeing me again. I found the coun-

try teeming with wealth. The land is splendidly fertile, and every other mountain is an El Dorado of minerals.

"I have a knack of getting along comfortably with 'all sorts and conditions of men' excepting the negro. I am sorry to say it, but it seems to me that there are some devilish characteristics inherent in the race, that you can never eradicate any more than you can wash him white with all the Sapolio soap and water in the world. Of course, I must believe that there are, or were, individuals like *Toussaint*, *Uncle Tom*, and the women who sang to the sick explorer, 'Oh, pity the poor white man,' etc.; but I am sorry to say that I never had the pleasure of meeting them!

"In Hayti the negroes have been their own masters for a hundred years, with all the advantages of a splendid country, and in close touch with modern civilization. The governing classes are, as a rule, educated, as the saying goes, yet any one who is familiar with the island is aware that Hayti is in a more degraded and savage condition than the darkest spot in Africa.

"Here was an exceptionally good opportunity to prove the capabilities of the negro race—a

splendidly rich and healthy country; the nations of the world giving their aid and sympathy to the young State to make it a success; and freedom from all outside trouble, if the Government only behaved reasonably well. What has been the result? A constant succession of bloodshed, cruelty, and crimes too dreadful to mention. The Haytian seems to have assimilated every vice of the white man, and has never ceased to practise every evil habit of his own ancestors. Voodoo worship, with its accompaniment of cannibalism, and other things of the most brutal character, are more in evidence today than in the old slavery times.

"In many of the inland villages I saw human flesh sold (under cover of another name) to be eaten when the people go through their dreadful orgies, in the horrible Voodoo worship. Of course, in the old slavery days such things were done, but they were practised in a very mild form, and in the strictest secrecy. For, in those days, the negro was held in check by stern masters, who, for their own comfort and safety, saw to it that their slaves conducted themselves, at least outwardly, like human beings. Another inherent characteristic of the race, rather amusing than otherwise, but very

irritating all the same, I found rampant in Hayti, viz., that peculiar superciliousness of manner—or rather, want of manner—which negroes always display towards white people wherever negroes are in large enough numbers to assert themselves. To be seen in all their most offensive characteristics, they must be studied in large majorities. A single specimen in the midst of other nationalities is a very mild creature, but place him in power, especially if he has the veneer of civilization on him, and you will invariably find the negro the most disagreeable species of the *genus homo* extant.

"Altogether I spent three months in Hayti, and I saw a good deal of the island and the blacks. When I got back to Port au Prince the Consul treated me as a great explorer, and assured me that I was the only white man he had known to go through such outlandish districts and come out with a whole skin.

"I did not visit any other of the West Indian islands, as I had explored most of them when I came up from the Pacific some years previously. So I bade my friend the Consul farewell, and took passage on a French barque, bound for La Guayra. After a year in Venezuela, spent in sampling all sorts of life—as gold-digger, va-

quero, gentleman about town when my pockets were full—and acquiring a fairly good knowledge of the Spanish language, and of Spanish habits, which I must admit were very congenial to my Bohemian disposition, I finally decided to strike due south until I reached the Orinoco. I did not make hard and fast plans, leaving my route to time and circumstance. But I had a general sort of hazy intention of following the southern branch of the Orinoco to its head waters, then crossing the Parima Mountains, striking across the Plains to the Rio Negro, and so keeping a general south-westerly course, with the vague intention—some time before I grew old—of reaching the Pacific.

"I struck the Orinoco at its confluence with the Apure. Here I rested a month, gathering information about the river and modes of travel, etc. I bought a canoe, and engaged two Indians for my river journey. I paid them well, always a good plan with our dark brothers, and, I think I may say, a good plan also with our white brothers, and I promised them a present of the canoe at the end of the trip. Before leaving civilization I provided myself with plenty of ammunition for my gun. I had a very handy and useful rifle and shot gun combined, one barrel carrying

ball and the other shot cartridge. For such a piece it was very light, only six pounds when loaded with six cartridges in each barrel and with its waterproof cover on.

"Fortunately for myself I could always succeed with all sorts of primitive mankind, so I had little difficulty in getting along. I never had a serious trouble with the Indians. I found that they nearly all understood Spanish more or less, that is, until I reached the valley of 'Araucaca'—but of that, more hereafter.

"I adopted the Indian mode of life and learned bush-craft so well that I could hunt, fish, and provide for myself in a general way, about as well as they themselves. I was six months canoeing and hunting on the Orinoco, and a very interesting time it was. Animals, birds, and fish of many kinds and strange forms, were abundant. That which gave us the most exciting, if least profitable sport, were the ugly, and at times, fierce Caymans, also known as the 'round-mouthed alligators.' Their skin is of some value, but we had no room in our frail canoe for such disagreeable cargo. At times these hideous monsters would boldly attack us, and then I had to waste my precious cartridges on them. But at last, after some practice, I be-

came so expert that one bullet in the eye would put *one* fiendish brute *hors de combat.*

"In many parts the Caymans are so numerous and fierce that the Indians live in mortal dread of them. Once we were camping near an Indian village repairing our canoe, which had been seriously damaged by a Cayman who nearly succeeded in having us for his supper. It was a part of the river where they are very dangerous. Early one morning I heard a great uproar, and upon throwing off my poncho and rushing out of our temporary hut of banana leaves, I witnessed a scene that I don't like to think of even now, although it happened nearly eight years ago. The Cayman, like most ugly things, is an arrant coward. But there are times, as with all cowards, when the excitement of hunger, or pure devilishness, will banish fear from his cruel heart, and then, look out! In this case a large canoe was coming across the river; there were six men paddling—three on a side—and a seventh man steering and paddling in the usual fashion. Besides the men there were four women and some children. The men were paddling furiously, without uttering a sound, save that they clicked their paddles on the side of the canoe at each stroke, which is a way they have

of scaring the Caymans, and which is usually successful under ordinary circumstances. But this was not an ordinary circumstance, and the Caymans were going to win! The people of the village were making a great noise, rushing about, gesticulating, and howling at the top of their voices. A minute's observation revealed the cause of the excitement. Close astern of the canoe, for fifty yards in extent perhaps, the otherwise still water was rippling in long sharp lines from a phalanx of pursuing Caymans. I could see their ugly snouts and wicked eyes just level with the water. By the time that I comprehended the situation, the canoe was within a quarter of a mile of the village landing-place, and would be in safety in a few minutes, as the brutes did not seem to have courage to attack, so I did not share the general frenzy of excitement. But I saw not what the Indians saw, and knew, was the danger to their friends.

"About a couple of hundred yards from the landing-place there floated what seemed several dirty, slimy logs of drift-wood, such as one often meets in navigating the Orinoco. I had not taken notice of these logs, they are so common, and my attention had been too intently fixed on

the awful race for life of the canoe-men. Then one of the Indians drew my attention to the seeming logs, and I quickly recognized the sign which even the Cayman cannot hide, unless his feet touch bottom; a slight rise and fall of his body as he breathes, but which is only discernible in perfectly still water, for the slight movement cannot be detected if there is the least ripple. If the people in the canoe had not been watching their foes behind, they would have seen the danger ahead in time to avoid, or at least try to avoid, the certain destruction of running on to the slippery reptiles, and so capsizing in their midst. As it was, the trap (which the Indians affirm the Caymans plan in advance) was completely successful. Before the poor people perceived that there was any obstruction, they shot on top of the seemingly slippery logs and capsized. Then with a horrible rush the river was lashed into a swirl of *crimson* foam, and wildly flung human forms. In less than five minutes from the first alarm all was over. But it was long enough, and bad enough, to last me a lifetime. At the earnest solicitation of the poor Indians, I stayed in that village for a week, and by careful shooting I killed fifty Caymans with fifty cartridges. At

last the fiends seemed to think it was a losing game, and betook themselves to other parts of the river.

"After two years of travel, or rather wandering, from the time I first launched on the Orinoco, I reached the eastern slopes of the Andes—part of that mighty range of mountains which extend from Panama to the Straits of Magellan, about one-third of the length of the earth, and the most uniformly high range, of such great extent, in the world.

"I had grown weary of the seemingly endless, dead level land, and eagerly made the best of my way towards the stupendous heights, whose snowy peaks glittered in the morning light like burnished silver, and slumbered in mysterious, ghostly shadow as the sun sank beyond where I knew the far Pacific lay. The more I thought of the sea, the more passionate became my desire to hear its voice, and cast my wearied body and soul upon its heaving bosom, which had always been like a mother's to me in days long since gone by.

"Indians became fewer as I left the lowlands, until I lost all trace of mankind. However, I had no difficulty in supporting myself. The mountain streams teemed with fish, and I

found birds plentiful. With the plains I left behind many kinds of game which I had become accustomed to, among others, the funny little piggy, the *peccary*, who used to waken me up in the morning with their querulous grunting, as a mob went trotting past my camp. Peccary is by no means bad tack if you know how to prepare and cook him. One good way is to steam him in the common earth-oven, which is the most primitive of all ovens, and the best. It must once have been a universal method of cooking with all races, at least with all pre-Adamites, for they have all used it at some period of their history, and with many it is their only mode of preparing a proper meal to this day. The very simplicity of the earth-oven is one of its great charms. You simply have to dig a hole in the earth, large or small, according to the quantity of what you have to cook, put a good fire in and over it, clap a dozen or two nice handy stones on top, letting them fall to the bottom of the hole as the fire burns down. By this time, if you have had a proper fire, the stones will be red hot. Then fill the oven half full of green leaves or grass, on this lay your flesh, fish, fowl, vegetables, and whatever you have to cook, cover with more leaves and grass,

pour over all a bucket of water to make steam, finally closing the whole with earth as tightly as possible so as to keep in the heat. In one to three hours, according to the quantity you have to cook, and according to the heat of your oven, you will turn out a banquet fit for a king. I often served up my piggy and other game in this way, using as vegetables various roots and leaves, which I had learned from my Indian friends were palatable and wholesome. The long slender roots of a variety of the common water-flag make a delicious dish when nicely cooked, and are passable enough even raw.

"My dear fellow," continued Wynyard, laughing quietly, "'there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy!' I have come to the conclusion that the physical code of what we call civilized life is all wrong, and that is why so many doctors are in the world. I spent nearly ten years out of sight of what we call civilization, and during all that long period I never knew that I had a stomach excepting at the rare intervals when I had not enough to eat. I think this is rather a unique record for a man who used to suffer the usual knowledge of that troublesome organ; and, moreover, it goes far to prove, as all dis-

coverers have always told us, that unsophisticated man is never a dyspeptic, whatever other disagreeable vices he may have at odd times, if you happen to rub him the wrong way.

"After leaving the plains, and travelling for a couple of weeks over very rough country, sometimes scaling precipices and then traversing wild ravines, I judged by the temperature at night, and the nearness of the snow-line overhead, that I was some three or four thousand feet above sea level. At this elevation I was completely barred further progress by a perpendicular wall of rock, absolutely impassable. It presented a perfectly smooth surface, without crack, as if it were the work of an intelligent hand in the beginning of time, which, of course, it was. For miles and miles the wall was as even as an apple deftly split in twain, but there was no vestige of the other half remaining. That had been pulverized by some irresistible force in the unthinkable time when God was building the world. Some such thoughts were in my mind as I instinctively looked for the other half of the strangely smooth cliff-wall. I remember seeing in North America one of the vast masses of rock which, in the ice-age, the glaciers played with, as children play with marbles. The stone

I refer to (as big as a small mountain) was half of another stone lying many miles distant. That this vast block of rock had been brought from some far-off land was evident by the fact that no stone of the same formation was found in the district. It had been flung there by the Ice Giants, who, in their play, had split it in twain, and cast the pieces many miles apart. The certainty of the halves having been one rock was fully proved by the most exact measurements.

"My cliff had evidently been formed in some such way, but there was no vestige of the other part excepting in the debris which had been ground to dust, and now, in the wonderful economy of Nature, was supporting splendid forests.

"I explored for three days north, along the wall, seeking some break or possible scaling point, but without success. Not even the marvellously sure-footed huanaco could find a spot to rest his foot on that polished surface. I retraced my weary steps to my starting-point. I tried south with no better result, and then I determined to rest and recruit for a week or two. The climate was about as near perfection as we ever find it in this world; neither too hot nor too cold, and at that time of year free from that great trouble of bush life, *rain*. I

made my camp in a bend of the cliff, where the ground was dry and sheltered from the wind, which was a little too chilly for comfort towards morning. A tiny stream issued from under the wall and supplied me not only with the sweetest water, but also with the most delicious little fish, like diminutive trout. Here I made for myself a very snug hut of the leaves of the *vijao* plant, a species of banana, but not a fruit-bearing variety. The leaves, which are from two to three feet in length, and about half that in width, are covered with a peculiar sort of varnish which resists rain for several weeks. Altogether, the *vijao* leaves are admirably adapted for covering a temporary hut, and are much used for that purpose by all the wandering tribes on the eastern slopes of the Peruvian Andes.

"For some weeks I employed myself in a general fossicking about the country, hunting and fishing, and—most important of all—curing meat, that is, making *yarqui* of birds and huanaco flesh. The process consists in cutting the meat into narrow, thin strips, dipping these into salt and water, then drying in the sun as quickly as possible. In my case I had no salt, but I had learned from the Indians to use the ashes of

the coca leaves, which for this purpose are quite a passable substitute. The Indians even affirm that the coca imparts some of its wonderful stimulating qualities to the meat so cured. I never proved this to my entire satisfaction, but there is no question of the efficacy of the leaves to assuage fatigue. I have known Indians to travel for a week at a time without a scrap of food, only keeping a coca leaf in the mouth—not swallowing it—and with an occasional, but very moderate, drink of water. I have myself kept on the march for three days on the same regimen without much inconvenience. But I felt the after effects much more acutely than the Indians did; in fact, they did not show any signs of extraordinary abstinence from food.

"I was anxious to provide as much *yarqui* as I could carry comfortably, for I knew that if I found a way westward I should meet with little if any game in the mountains. Besides, I would have to hurry forward as fast as possible on account of the intense cold when I reached the snow line.

"One day I shot a gorgeous macaw, which, in falling, being only wounded, swept towards the cliff and fell a little way south of my camp. There being no cover about the spot, I knew I

would find my bird easily enough, so I did not hurry until I had shot a couple more of the splendid fellows; then I went to pick up my first bird. He was not dead, and as I approached he disappeared, as if by magic, into the cliff. After hunting about for a while, I found a little crevice into which I thought he had gone. I set to work to clear away the loose stones and earth from the spot so as to fish him out. But to my surprise the further I penetrated the deeper and larger became the opening, and, strangest of all, I met a gentle breath of balmy, faintly scented air! I became deeply interested in my discovery, forgot all about my bird, and set to work with all my might to solve the mystery. After working hard until long past midday, as I knew by the infallible timepiece, hunger, I concluded to desist from further exploration, but fully determined to renew the attack on the morrow. I slept sound and long that night, and dreamed a very beautiful dream, which, strange to say, I dreamed again last night, exactly word for word."

Chapter III

"I DREAMT I was dead. And a sense of great relief swept over my soul as I fully realized I was at last free from the depressing companionship of the body which had held me in bondage so many weary years. Yet, as I looked upon *that* which I had been, and from which I knew I was parting for ever, I felt a dim, lingering regret, such as one is apt to feel when handing to a beggar some old, worn suit of clothes which has served one gaily and well, in many happy, and sad, bygone days. But when a low voice in the air whispered: 'You may return ere it is too late,' I shuddered, and hasted away in a strange horror at the mere suggestion of returning to *that companionship!*

"The region of my dream was a restful, soothing land, such as a still autumn evening on our earth, when the sun sinks beyond the purple hills, and the moon lights the world with shadowy glory. I passed on, and on, with no fear and with no eager curiosity, such as we usually feel in totally new surroundings. My soul was at rest. I seemed to have known it all before, and felt like

one returning home after long wandering. No obstruction barred my way. Even motion was an exquisite delight, and I laughed like a little child as I touched a splendid flower, or laid my hand upon a bird's gorgeous wings, while it sang such songs as were never heard on earth!

"Then methought a pang of terror seized me, as a flash of thought like a voice seemed to say: 'The night is far spent, you will soon awake'; and weeping, I prayed the little prayers my mother taught me to pray in babyhood. In my distress and tears I had not noticed that the dimness was giving place to a silvery light, brighter than the brightest sunlight that ever shone, and a voice I seemed to know whispered: 'There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.' And I was comforted in thinking I had left earth's record for ever, and that *Time* would trouble me no more! The whisper was the voice of an Angel, who laid her cool hands on my tearful face as we soothe a child in grief; and, in the action, I seemed to recognize her, and cried a name which I never thought to speak again. The Angel turned upon me a face of celestial beauty and tenderness, but it was *not* the face

I had lost! 'Not yet,' said the heavenly messenger, '*she* is not yet made perfect through suffering. I am one of those guardians to whom our Lord referred when he said: "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." And when we are given the sacred task of guarding, we become, through some subtile sympathy, twin soul with the guarded one, and that is why you thought I was *the other*! No!—Not yet,' continued my heavenly visitant. 'Your allotted tasks are not yet fulfilled, and for reasons which neither mortal nor immortal can ever know, *and in this land never even wish to know*, you must both fulfil those tasks, and all you or we can know is that at last all is well!'

"When I awoke the sun was glittering through the trees, and happy birds were making the woods vocal with their matins of thanksgiving to their Maker for another day of their beautiful life. I arose much refreshed, and with such a feeling of trust and comfort as I had not known for many a day. The dream did not pass, as dreams usually do, into a hazy memory, but remained as clear and distinct as any other event of my life. And last night when it was repeated I knew from the first word exactly

how it would end, and I smiled, even when weeping, knowing how soon comfort would come.

"I was eager to begin exploring my strange cavern, and after a hasty breakfast I began my preparations. I knew by the continual gentle draught of faintly scented air that the cave must debouch somehow and somewhere on fields of flowers. After thinking over the matter seriously I concluded that it would be wise to be provided for a forward movement in case the cave should prove a pass through the mountains. I therefore decided to make my food and other belongings into as small a compass as possible, and also to provide some sort of light, an absolute necessity for such a journey.

"In the rocky debris along the foot of the cliff there was abundance of the castor oil plant growing, and I had learned from the Indians the method of making very good candles, or rather torches, from its beans. The Indian women are very deft at the business, which simply consists in removing the outer hard shell of the bean. This is neatly done by a single crack between the teeth, and then the soft white fleshy part is strung upon a bit of the hard, tough midrib of a palm frond; bean

after bean is strung on until the torch is a foot or two in length. The affair is a little more troublesome to light than an ordinary candle, but when it gets fairly going it affords quite a good light, and three or four tied together make a fine blaze. Of course only fully ripe beans must be used, as they only have acquired their maximum quantity of oil. I manufactured quite a large supply of these candles, for I knew that if I were left in total darkness in such an extensive cave as I had reason to think this was, I should never find my way out. I spent a week on this work, and on the eighth morning after my discovery, with all my belongings securely fixed about me I left the light of the sun, which I knew it was quite possible I should never see again. I loaded both barrels of my gun, for the puma—American lion—hides her young in caves, and is a fierce fighter at such times (like all mother things) although an arrant coward as a rule.

"I little thought as I looked at the sunlight that glorious morning, under what strange conditions I would behold it next. I crept into the cave and slowly and laboriously made my way into the darkness. I wished to save my torches as much as possible, so I felt my way

along as best I could, for, I should judge, four or five hours, only lighting a torch occasionally when the cave became very rough. Whether with my torch or in darkness I always steered my course by the soft perfumed zephyr which never ceased to blow on my face.

"I rested for an hour or so and refreshed myself with my midday meal and a drink of delicious water which I found in little pools that were filled by drops here and there from the roof. I again started and travelled until what I deemed was night. After supper and a little conversation with myself (a trick I had acquired in my lonely life), I said the simple prayers I learnt in childhood, rolled myself snugly in my poncho and went off into a sound sleep. In the cave I had of course no method of measuring time excepting by my regular habits of eating and sleeping. Before starting I had apportioned my food into daily rations, tying up each meal in coca leaves, the leaves which—as I told you—have the property of enabling one to sustain life under great privation and fatigue. I ate three portions of my food per day, or rather I should say, what I supposed to be a day. In my long lonely travelling in South America I had made it a rule to camp and

have a meal about every five hours. I had become so accustomed to this habit that I could tell the time of day pretty accurately. It was the same with sleeping. I found that after about sixteen hours of active wakefulness I slept soundly for eight hours and awoke regularly at sunrise. Under the new conditions of utter darkness I started with the intention of keeping in some sort a record of time, and I think I succeeded fairly well, as I will presently show you.

"Greatly to my advantage I found the cave, although, as a rule, of a vast height, yet comparatively narrow, and without those misleading *cul-de-sac* branches which are dangerously frequent in most great caves, leading nowhere, and only hopelessly exhausting the explorer. In many parts the middle seemed to be water-worn and as smooth and solid as a well kept road, on which I made excellent progress. Then I would come to parts covered with great broken masses of granite, over which I had to clamber slowly and carefully. Every hour or so I lit a torch with my flint and steel, and carefully surveyed my surroundings. Sometimes the cave was so low that I could just pass without stooping, then it would expand to a vast dome, so high that

the roof was beyond the reach of my torchlight, only a vague space of ghostly shadows. In such parts there were great numbers of wonderful stalagmites and stalactites in many strange shapes and beautiful colours; many so massive and absolutely symmetrical, that they seemed like pillars of some fabled Titanic cathedral, beyond all human architectural conception! The lime, iron, and other minerals, of which these stalagmites are formed, produce the most strangely beautiful effects, when, instead of falling drop by drop on one spot, as in building pillars, the water percolates through long crevices in the roof, and forms thin, wavy sheets, like delicate drapery woven in the most gorgeous colours; and withal, so fragile and light, that a careless touch of mine often broke off great pieces which seemed to float rather than to fall, and shiver with a tinkling of music, into a mass of sparkling, jewelled fragments. It gave me a strangely sad feeling of desecration when, by an accidental movement, I would shatter in ruins a glittering expanse of splendour, whose wonderful construction had probably occupied hundreds of thousands of years. How tremendously impressive it was to set my torch behind one of these gorgeously coloured 'curtains,' and, taking a

position where I could study its delicate loveliness, to think that of its fifty feet or so in width and height, only a foot at most had been added since the creation of Adam! Scientists have proved by careful study, and the most accurate measurements possible, the incredibly slow growth of these wonderful creations. As I gazed upon these marvellous and lovely formations which had required countless ages to attain their present condition, *St. Peter's* most appropriate exclamation was forcibly brought to my memory: 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' And then would follow the reflection, how utterly unworthy of our weeping and rejoicing are the sorrows and joys of the fleeting moments of our earthly journey, *if* we only manage to accomplish that rough little journey creditably!

"I was three weeks in the strangely silent surroundings of that cavern, but it was by no means wasted time. In that utterly cimmerian darkness, my mind was not distracted by 'the lust of the eye'; and when I threw the torchlight on my cathedral, there was absolutely not a sound to disturb my soul in its wonder and worship. I learnt the full meaning of the much neglected command, 'Be still, and know that I

am God,' much more correctly than I had hitherto done from all the sermons I ever heard preached, and I have heard a good many.

"The slight current of delicately scented and refreshing air, which met me when I first discovered the cave, never ceased, and, to my great comfort, it always came from the direction towards which I was travelling. On what I deemed to be my sixteenth day in the cave I ate the last portion of food, and only had a few coca leaves left. I had strictly confined myself to the smallest quantity of food that would sustain life, and I had, during the last few days, felt my strength gradually failing. However, with the sustaining help of the coca leaves, I managed to struggle on for four days more; and then, completely exhausted, like a willing horse done up on some sandy desert, my body refused to obey the spur of the spirit any longer. Even at that supreme moment I distinctly noticed that the flower-scented air came stronger and fresher as I advanced; by which I judged that I must be near my 'Promised Land.' But I gradually realized that the battle was lost, and I calmly prepared to lay me down comfortably beside a little pool of water, and quietly slip my cables.

"As I turned my weary face towards the sweet

breath of air which seemed to come fresher and stronger at that moment, I thought I saw a star far, far off. I remember thinking it was only an optical delusion, but I took it as a good omen, and so prepared to solve the *great mystery*. But the star was in reality a ray of light, and this I slowly realized. Scarcely knowing what I did, I crept weakly forward, feeling the odorous air blow fresher and sweeter on my face as I advanced. At last, oh how blessed it was! I crawled, with bleeding feet and scarred hands, into God's glorious sunlight, on what I reckoned to be the twentieth day of my cave travel, and I experienced a little glow of satisfaction that it was morning, as I had felt sure it was, according to the record of food and sleep I had kept.

"A melody of bird music, like silver bells, was the first sound that fell on my weary senses after the awful stillness of the cave life. Then I was soothed by the loving warmth of the kindly sun, as a sick child is soothed by the magical warmth of its mother's bosom. A little while of these blessed things, and I sank on the flower-strewn sod, and wandered far away into happy swoonland. How long I lay thus I know not. When I awoke I found myself lying luxuriously on a bed, in a curiously furnished room,

with a kindly, noble-looking old man watching me. As soon as he perceived that I was awake he smiled, said some soft words in a language I had never heard before, and then set about mixing liquids and powders from various containers of beautiful shapes, and strange material.

"When he had got the mixture to his liking, he came forward with a friendly and dignified salutation, and motioned me to drink from the cup he held in his hand. I thought *that* was the most delicious draught I ever tasted, as I slowly drained the contents of the cup, and faintly expressed my thanks. The old man made a sign for me to sleep, which I promptly obeyed, sliding into oblivion with a blessedly happy feeling, as if I were floating on scented beds of asphodel in Paradise.

"When I again awoke my nurse brought me some light food, talking in musical, kindly tones the while I ate. I did not in the least recognize what I ate; I only know that it tasted like angels' food, which, in the kindly manner of the providing, it really was. How often in the days, months, and years that followed my introduction to life in the valley of Araucaca did I realize that my old life had vanished like a

troubled dream, and that I had found the true life which our Maker designed for us to live. But I am anticipating.

"When I had finished that delightful repast, I thanked my kind host, in my own language, which, of course, he did not understand any more than I understood his, but he quickly understood my loving pressure of his hand. Oh! how cool and soft his hands were as I held them in my feverish, skeleton fingers. I have often had cause to notice how universally that language is understood from the lowest to the highest of God's creatures. All the flights of eloquence are weak and ineffective in comparison with the language of the hands. Words may be false, the hands never tell lies.

"Under such kind and judicious treatment I soon regained strength, and began to move about, and once more take an interest in life. My host provided me with some clothing of the country, which is made of the most delightfully soft material woven from the wool of the llama. The usual dress for men consists of undershirt and vest—more or less ornamented—coat reaching to the knee, loose trousers, stockings, and moccasins. In cold weather the universal poncho of South America is worn,

but it is of lighter and finer quality than I have seen elsewhere. The women have practically the same clothing as the men, only instead of trousers they wear a skirt of ornamented cloth, with stockings and moccasins beautifully stitched with various coloured thread. Both sexes wear light straw hats such as I have never seen elsewhere. These hats are so splendidly soft and pliable that one can easily be drawn through a common finger ring, and yet it will keep in good shape for years. I used to think that it was owing to this light and comfortable headgear that these people retained their fine, abundant hair even in extreme old age. I never noticed a man showing signs of baldness, and yet many were a good bit over a hundred, as their registers incontestably proved. Indeed, they told me that if one died short of a hundred years of age he was mourned for as passing before his allotted time. No doubt their splendid health and longevity is partly owing to a custom of which I learned afterwards; a sort of weeding-out system, if I may use the phrase, of the weakly children shortly after birth. As I was at that time deeply concerned regarding the laws of health, on account of my own deplorable condition when I first reached the valley of

Araucaca, I may as well state a few facts regarding hygiene as practised by these wise people.

"In every village there is a board of health. It consists of five members, a majority vote of whom is decisive on all hygienic subjects which may come to their notice. One important part of their duty is to examine all children shortly after birth, and if a child is in the least weakly, or abnormal, its parents and itself are saved any further sorrow and suffering by a quiet system of elimination. This board consists of very learned men, who have thoroughly studied the *laws of health, not of disease, as our Medicos have insanely done,* and, with this result, that the people of Araucaca are practically free from disease, a result that I am not aware has been achieved in any portion of the globe by so-called medical scientists, who have practised their system of cutting and drugging upon suffering humanity, century after century. Even in the surgical lines, upon which our medical schools pride themselves so complacently, I have seen such things as would make common-sense people stare and wonder. For instance, the following case came under my immediate notice. My host's youngest son, a lad

of eighteen or nineteen, was brought home one day in a deplorable condition. He had been hunting wild huanacos, and by some mischance had lost his footing on a slippery cliff, and suffered such a fall that his companions brought him home in great grief, supposing him dead, which, indeed, the poor boy seemed to be.

"He was certainly in a most pitiful condition. Both legs were badly broken, that is, the bones were splintered. His right shoulder and connecting bones were simply smashed to pieces, the broken bones projecting here and there through the lacerated skin. A member of the health committee was called, and he proceeded in a calm, business-like way to place the boy in as natural a position as possible, deftly and tenderly got the broken bones as nearly as possible into their proper positions, and bound all the wounds in plasters of finely pulverized roots of a vine (a variety of the *common morning glory*). Not one limb was amputated, not one drug was administered. Water and the thinnest kind of gruel were the only sustenance given; the bandages and pulverized roots were moistened two or three times a day, and fresh ones applied every third day.

"I watched the case with the greatest in-

terest, and I know that this was the whole process. What struck me as a curious feature was that his parents and the rest of the family showed no more anxiety from first to last than we would over any common accident of a rather bad cut or a finger out of joint. I evinced much more solicitude than any of the family; but this was not from any want of affection, for I had many proofs of their great love for each other; it was simply the fact that they knew the surgeon, with his wonderful skill, aided by the lad's superb health—as tough as a wild goat—would pull the boy through. And he did, most triumphantly. In less than three months my young friend could get about with the aid of a stick, and in six months he was as active and bright as ever he had been in his life! Now, I may remark *en passant*, that if there is one of our doctors who, working on lines which the *Faculty would approve*, could effect such a cure, all I can say is that I have not had the pleasure of meeting him. I remember two comrades of mine in Africa, who were brought into camp after a little skirmish. One had a leg broken by his horse being shot and falling on him, the other had a dislocated arm. They were by no means bad cases. The

doctors put both men under chloroform, cut off the leg, and put the dislocated arm in plaster of Paris. The man who lost his leg died of shock and low spirits at the loss, and the other died of fever, moaning in his delirium, in a way that was most distressing to hear: 'Take my arm out of the rock, it is crushing me to death.' But the doctors kept him hard and fast; they said it was the only way to save his life, but it didn't! Curious, wasn't it?

"When I became strong enough to move about and inspect my surroundings, I began to realize fully that I had certainly gotten into a mysterious country, amongst a people, the handsomest, the gentlest, and the most virtuous I had ever met. In appearance they were somewhat like what we imagine the Incas and nobles of Peru to have been when first discovered by the Spaniards, and ere they were degraded and practically exterminated by oppression and cruelty. Fortunately for these people, the Spanish, or any other explorers, never found the valley of Araucaca, and so they have escaped the fate of all aboriginal nations when brought into contact with the arrogant, selfish white race.

"Both men and women are above the average

height of mankind, and their complexions of a lighter shade than that of any of the other brown races I have met. As my host's house was a typical home of the better sort, I may as well describe what it was like, and of what his family consisted. I said just now 'a home of the better sort,' but that is hardly correct, as all houses are practically the same in that truly democratic community; they only vary in size according to the number of the household. And I remarked that households are never large, as is generally the case with us, the children in a family never exceeding four, and usually only two or three.

"First of course comes my friend and benefactor, *Haseca*, tall, fully six feet, of a graceful carriage, and with the striking features and splendid eyes of the highborn, old Peruvian nobility. His wife, two daughters and two sons, completed the household. The sons and daughters, like their parents, were extremely handsome, but this was nothing uncommon among a people universally good looking. My friend's house (a good sample of the valley architecture) is a one-story building, rather narrow, and with a veranda extending around the whole building. The rooms are exactly the width of the house,

so that in passing from room to room one has to pass along the veranda, which thus becomes the general meeting-place of the family, and visitors are also received there, ample accommodation being provided in the shape of large and small settees, covered comfortably with snowy white llama skins. The houses as a rule are built of a peculiar stone found in many parts of the valley, of a delicate pink colour, and so soft when first quarried that it can be cut into any desired shape as easily as chalk. By exposure to the atmosphere it soon becomes as hard as marble, and capable of a fine polish. The roofs are covered with a thick, neat thatch of grass—a species of pampas—which, like all thatch, affords warmth in winter and coolness in summer.

"As I said, the stone when fresh quarried can be easily cut into any shape desired. The outside walls are usually left rough, the inside is cut perfectly smooth, and after hardening, beautifully polished. Some people, however, like my host, prefer to leave both the outside and inside walls rough, in which case the rooms are lined in a most artistic manner with the reeds of the pampas grass, which are closely laced together with twine made from the beauti-

fully silky, snow-white fibre of the agave plant. The twine is dyed various colours, and the workmen in lacing the reeds, invent unique designs of birds, fish, flowers, trees, llamas, and such like, according to the tastes of the designers, and the general effect is most pleasing and effective.

"You will of course notice," continued my friend, "that I have given you a very fragmentary account of Araucaca, and indeed of all my wanderings. What is more, I fear you will find the disjointed history of the nine or ten years since we parted in England not only disjointed, but wearisome, in which case you must just say so and I will leave the story of my adventure untold, which would be no great loss to you or any one else." Of course I hastened to assure him that I was not only deeply interested in the description of his mysterious valley, but that I also wished to have an account of his voyaging since he foolishly left such an ideal abode. "Foolishly, indeed," said Wynyard. "But when the spirit of unrest takes hold of man, or of angel, neither heaven nor earthly paradise, with all their blessedness, can allay the craving. Each must go forth to his doom, as we have been so sadly told by the *History* which never misstates.

"I lived with these happy people for nearly six years, so I learned their customs and modes of life pretty thoroughly, and explored their territory from end to end. The valley of Araucaca is situated in the heart of the most inaccessible peaks of the Andes, well within the tropics. Of course I had no means of locating its exact position, and if I had I should be loath to give it, and so run the risk of demoralizing that virtuous and happy community by introducing carpet-baggers with every '*ism*' that is falsely called civilization, and only a very faint knowledge of the simple laws of *meum et tuum*. The whole length of the valley is about one hundred miles from north to south, and somewhere about thirty miles wide. I call it a valley, but this is hardly correct, for Araucaca is simply a hollow in the Andes, without inlet or outlet. The many mountain streams which descend from the snowy ranges flow into the beautiful lake of *Sacna*, which occupies the centre of the valley. To this lake there is no visible outlet, and as its waters only rise and fall about a foot in winter or summer, there must be some subterranean escape for its surplus waters. The people say that in the middle of the lake there are no

soundings. I have myself tried with a two hundred fathom line without success. The lake is about six miles in length, with pretty pebbly shores, and many fairy islets scattered over its glittering expanse. It abounds with fish, which very much resemble the beautiful game, *Owinenishi*, of lake St. John in the Province of Quebec.

"Of course on such a fine sheet of water an ingenious people have many varieties of craft. They are to be found of all sorts and sizes; from the most ancient and primitive of all, the common serviceable dug-out, to the large elegant boat of five or six tons burden, built of narrow boards of a tough species of fir (*Lahual* the Indians call it) which grows immediately below the snow line; the nearer the snow line the tree is found the tougher and finer is the wood. It is very remarkable the facility with which this tree can be split into boards twenty, and even thirty feet long, as smooth and fair as if cut with a saw. The boats made of this fir display clever workmanship, and many sail remarkably fast. I have sailed one over a measured course of twelve miles in a little less than an hour, an hour recorded by that most accurate of all time keepers, a sun-dial. In every village

there is a sun-dial of the most beautifully polished stone, the style being made of gold, hardened with copper and tin, the only other metals besides gold found in Araucaca.

"It is the custom of these people to build their boats in a curious but most secure fashion by lacing the boards together with very fine, strong twine made of the agave fibre. This method of building has the peculiar advantage of allowing the boat to *work*, that is, to bend and give a little in a stiff breeze, which I have heard old sailors say is a great advantage in a racing craft.

"The boats are painted, or rather varnished, with the wax-like substance obtained from the wax-palm, which is more or less common all over tropical America. This substance, when boiled and mixed with certain kinds of earth, makes a good application for all woodwork, and lasts a considerable time. Beautiful and brilliant tapers for domestic use are also made of this most useful substance.

"These boats have an outrigger which, unlike the South Sea canoe, is not a permanent fixture, but can be easily shipped or unshipped at pleasure. In navigating narrow passages or winding creeks the outrigger is always removed, but in clear, open water, especially when beating to

windward, it is a *sine qua non* of fast sailing. Not only does it enable a boat to sail much nearer the wind, but with a couple of men on the outrigger to keep it, by their extra weight, from jumping out of the water, your boat will remain on perfectly even keel in the stiffest breeze, without the slightest danger of a capsize although you crack on until mast and sail go over the side. The outrigger being always carried on the weather side when under sail, the object of putting a man or two on it in a breeze is obvious.

"The territory consists of rolling downs extremely fertile, while the slopes of the Andes to a height of three thousand feet or so are clothed with magnificent forests, including many fruit trees of temperate and tropical climes. It was strangely beautiful to observe how exactly each species found its own suitable zone, and whether we call it natural instinct, or the directing hand of God, it all comes to the same stupendous miracle at last.

"No care whatever is bestowed on the forests, excepting, of course, the care such a wise people naturally take in the avoidance of damage by fire or needless waste of any kind. Nature, or rather Nature's God, does all the rest, from the

first zone of bananas and mangoes, through the succeeding zones of figs, oranges, cherries, pears, apples, etc. (all these intermingled with many others), until the last zone, consisting of the hardy coniferous family, is reached, the higher portions of which grow smaller and smaller, tougher, and more gnarled as the line of perpetual snow is approached.

"The lower zones of forest abound in birds of gorgeous plumage and the most exquisite powers of song; songs which never palled on my delighted ear, although their music filled my room, morning after morning, for six years—wonderfully spiritual songs, which I can only compare with a variety of silver bells tuned by no earthly hand. Sometimes, in my dreams, God in His mercy enables me to hear them yet!

"The whole valley—with the exception of the lake, rivers, and forest lands—is composed of splendidly fertile rolling downs. I have seen twenty tons of the fine yellow Peruvian potato taken from one acre of land, and the ordinary yield of maize is a hundred bushels per acre.

"I think that under its present wise management Araucaca could support at least a hundred times its present population. Land is apportioned to each village according to the number

of its inhabitants, and the utmost care is bestowed upon it; so there is little danger of the land becoming run out, as often happens in other countries.

"After cropping three years the land is allowed to lie fallow as many more. When the third crop is harvested, the fields are well manured with decaying leaves from the mountains, and by the time the land is again brought under cultivation it is as fertile as virgin soil.

"The climate of Araucaca is perfectly delightful. The heat of summer is tempered by the clouds which gather on the great peaks of the Andes; the winter is genial, and never severe, owing to the entire absence of high winds. During the balmy summer months it was a never-failing source of interest and wonderment to me to watch and study the cloud-wrack and storms on the far peaks of the Andes—storms which never descended to the plains of Araucaca, save in the form of gentle, refreshing showers, which generally fell at night. We, in the valley, bathed in sunlight or moonlight, the air gently stirred by the soft, scented breeze from the forests, could watch, on the far-off peaks more than fifteen thousand feet above us, dark storm-clouds, driven by fierce winds of

hurricane force and torn by great sheets of lurid lightning, leaping in their mad revels from cloud-wrack to cloud-wrack. What seemed unaccountable to me until I realized the great distance, not a sound of wild storm or thunder reached our ears, only an occasional faint roll, like a wave of far-off music.

"I was deeply impressed by the strange phenomenon that a nation could exist without those things which we deem essential to the existence of a State, viz., prisons, a complicated code of civil and criminal laws, with a parasitical army of greedy lawyers to interpret, and a set of automaton judges to execute, these same laws. This people have their State established on the simple bases of *justice* to all, and it is superfluous to say that it is an easy matter to decide what is *just*, when judges wish to do so, without any rigmarole of legal verbosity, which is only invented for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many.

"The people of Araucaca have existed from very remote ages, as their records prove. Their history is kept in sign language, or rather picture writing, which is comparatively simple in construction as regards grammar, but very difficult to acquire; and only those possessed of

first-rate memories and clever hands ever become proficient scholars. While I am on the subject of education I may remark that these people have reduced this intricate and much abused question to a very simple and satisfactory basis. The whole system of government being a true democracy, it naturally follows that there are no differences of rank or class, as we understand these terms; rich and poor, high and low, educated and ignorant, do not exist. Each citizen performs his or her allotted share of labour, and reaps his or her allotted share of reward, viz., health and happiness, and so are content. I do not mean shares allotted by human laws, but by the inexorable law of God, without the fulfilment of which mankind have proved, over and over again, from beggar to millionaire, that happiness *cannot* be attained. These simple folk have solved the secret which the so-called wise men of the world have been seeking in all ages, but always seeking in vain, because always on the wrong track; forgetting, or not having learned, that Nemesis never sleeps, and never *forgets*, 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

"In Araucaca it is imperative upon all parents to teach their children to read and write in-

telligently a simple form of picture writing. Afterwards, those who wish to devote themselves to study can do so without let or hindrance, but it must be done by the pupil's own industry and perseverance. There is no compulsion and no cramming. Here learned men are truly learned men, not merely stuffed machines out of which you can grind words of worthless dead languages and dates of very questionable events which would be much better forgotten. Parents must also teach their sons the arts of agriculture, mining, and all handicrafts, and make their daughters experts in all household duties. Each father is not only the head, but also the magistrate in his own household, and in the event of an appeal from his decision (an event so rare that I never heard of one during all the years that I lived in the valley) the case is brought before the council of seven learned men, and their judgement is final.

"This council (with the exception of the parents and the boards of health and agriculture in each village) is the only visible power or authority in the land. It consists of seven learned men, who must be over fifty years of age, and have shown by their lives and deportment that they are eminently qualified for the

position. When a vacancy occurs by the death of a member, his successor is chosen by unanimous vote of the remaining members, which selection must be made on the day following the death. The duties of the council consist of keeping a record of the most important events of the nation, recording births, marriages, and deaths, and hearing appeals. Their absolute justice and authority is never questioned; not from fear, for these seven men have no physical power or other privileges more than any other members of the community. Their power is derived from the simple fact that perfect justice is always rendered. There *seems* to be no inducement to render anything except justice!

"The Araucaca Records extend back nearly two thousand years. But the record of the first thousand years is almost merely a list of names of heads of families, the designation of villages and lands apportioned to them, the discoveries of gold and copper mines, methods of smelting the ore, etc. But there is one strange exception, viz., a wonderfully beautiful, though very concise, notice of a great *teacher*, who mysteriously appeared, taught, and disappeared many hundreds of years ago. When I said to my friends that I was astonished the scribes of that

date had not recorded more fully the life and teaching of their great instructor, they showed me a brief note to the effect that the teacher had said he wished his teaching to be inscribed on the *heart*, not on sheets of papyrus. And I think that the peaceful state of the valley and its freedom from crime prove that his wish has been fulfilled.

"There is no record of the origin of the tribe, or of its entrance into the valley. These far back events can only be traced in folklore, songs, and oral tradition, which of course are all more or less vague and misty. But their picture writing seems to indicate a far northern origin. The accomplishment could not have been acquired in Peru, as the Peruvians never possessed this elegant art. I think the Araucaca people must be a remnant of that very ancient nation who occupied Mexico and the adjacent countries before the invasion of the Toltecs and Aztecs.

"Ah! if the superstitious Spaniards had not been so very zealous, as historians tell us, in 'burning in mountain-heaps' the invaluable picture writings which they found in such abundance when they conquered Mexico, the world might yet possess records of a wonderful

vanished *past* that is now buried in impenetrable darkness—records of the unknown architects of those vast and splendid ruins scattered throughout the jungles of central America; ruins which have been the awe-inspiring amazement of all explorers who have wandered in those trackless wilds from time to time for the last four hundred years. But neither white man nor Indian has cast the least glimmer of light on those marvellous builders, whence they came, and whither they disappeared.

"The Araucaca picture writing — which I learned to read slowly, but never to write—is done upon a snow-white material, somewhat like the Egyptian papyrus, but smoother and finer in texture. It is made of the inside bark of a species of mulberry, instead of the water-reed which the scribes of the Nile used for their writing.

"The papyrus used by the Araucaca Council is cut into sheets two feet long by fifteen inches wide. In their writing each single mark represents a word, so that in the same space the Araucaca scribe can put nearly as many words as we can put letters, and when the page is completed, the coloured picture writing is certainly much more attractive-looking than ours.

"It is the duty (I had almost said the *pleasure*, they seem so interested in their beautiful work) of the Council to keep the records of the nation in perfect order, entering only the most important events as concisely as possible. Each set of sheets containing the records of ten years is entered in an index volume with the number of the shelf where it is to be found, so that sets are never disturbed unless when required. Each sheet when it is filled with writing, and after allowing time for the various coloured inks to become thoroughly dry, is dipped in a solution made from certain animal and vegetable substances, as clear as water, which when dry leaves a fine thin coating upon the papyrus, almost like pliable glass, and renders it absolutely impervious to the ravages of time and free from the dangerous brittleness of the Egyptian variety. I handled sheets which had been written nearly two thousand years before, and they were in as good preservation as those written while I was in the valley. The records are written and stored in a handsome stone building, which is invulnerable to fire, the roof being composed of moderately thin blocks of stone instead of the usual thatch.

"I must now give you in my erratic way a

synopsis of how those people conduct the general work of the community, without one portion having too much to do and the other portion having too *little*. Of course, in such a state of society as theirs, where commerce, as we understand the term, does not exist, the people depend wholly upon the products of the soil. Therefore to utilize the land in the most economical way is to the advantage of all. The land is held in common, and the only private ownership which exists is simply the ground upon which a man's house stands and a small portion around it. Whatever farming lands are required for the support of the community are cultivated by the people *en masse*, not individually, as is mostly the custom in the world. By this means much loss, many failures, and mistakes are avoided, the elder and more expert men showing the younger and less experienced how to do all manner of work, so as to produce the most effective results with the least outlay of labour.

"Each village community, consisting of four or five hundred individuals, assemble on a certain given day for planting or harvesting, as the case may be. Each family is under the absolute control of the father, as head of the house, or in the event of his decease, the eldest

son succeeds to the management of the household in all field work. Of course while the mother lives she is supreme in the domestic affairs of her family. If both parents die when the children are still too young to manage for themselves, the nearest relatives take them into their households and care for them exactly as their own children. In fact it often seemed to me that they had a greater tenderness for the adopted children than for their own, if that were possible.

"When the crops are harvested the produce is apportioned according to the number of persons in a family. All the men in a village who are over sixty years of age are members of a committee who attend to this important business, and so far from any dispute ever arising, it never seems to enter any one's mind that unfair distribution can possibly take place.

"Men over fifty years of age are not expected to labour in the fields, but the work is so light, and the assembling of friends and neighbours so pleasant and cheerful, that it is customary for old and young to turn out alike. Members of the Learned Council and the Board of Health are the only men who are frequently absent on account of their important, not to

say onerous, duties. But from whatever cause members of the community may be absent from field, or other labour (whether from age, sickness, professional duties, or any other necessity) all receive an equal share of the product, whatever that may happen to be. According to the number in the household, all share and share alike, and the system works admirably with those simple and wise folk, for there is no *worthless* wealth and not a vestige of poverty. And this," soliloquized my friend, "I think is a greater achievement than the invention of a submarine to sink a ship with a thousand men on board, who never did you any harm, and whom you never even saw, or the invention of an insane-looking machine to run at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, along peaceful country lanes, causing terror to inoffensive men and women, and filling the beautiful countryside with a horrible, deadly effluvium, instead of the natural life-giving odour of hawthorn and apple blossom. In fact it is simply the old story which the wise man told us long, long ago: 'Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.'

"If, for example, a house has to be built for a

young couple, the work is done cheerfully and willingly by the men of the village, each knowing that some time or other it will come round to his turn, or to some member of his family, to receive the same benefit. And it is truly astonishing how easily and expeditiously a fine house can be built, the work being done, not only willingly, but with the greatest good humour, as if all hands were playing some highly entertaining and exhilarating game, good for the soul as well as for the body, which most certainly it is.

"In such ways all people work equally, and none are over-worked. Of course the domestic work of the house is done by the members of the family, but all the rest is accomplished by community labour, and I know, by actual observation, that all the people have ample time for recreation, and poverty or destitution do not exist. No wealthy class oppress their poorer fellow creatures by adding millions to millions of unproductive hoards, every dollar of which only adds another anxiety to the rich, and represents another comfort filched from a poorer and less expert, but in all probability a purer-minded brother!

"I am quite aware that such a happy and contented state of society is beyond *our* reach.

Everlasting arguments, revolutions and bloodshed, kings and presidents, schools and philosophy, only lead wearily round, again and again, to the old deplorable condition of the wealthy few and the poverty-stricken many, with aching, unsatisfied longings in every human soul. The people of Araucaca are of another sort altogether. They are thoroughly conservative, and are averse to the least change. From the oldest to the youngest (from mere force of habit I had almost used the vile expression 'from the highest to the lowest') not one would vote for a change of their system. It is part of *themselves*, part of their life, of their love! In short, they have not been smitten with that incurable disease, which, alas, fell upon Adam and all his descendants, the curse of 'the knowledge of good and evil,' with all its intolerable burden of unsatisfied craving and vain quest for happiness in utterly mistaken directions. These mistakes are proved to be mistakes, century after century; but still the mad rush goes on, mankind wildly chasing some will-o'-the-wisp, which when grasped is found to be as worthlessly unstable as some exploded panacea which was lauded as perfection a thousand years before!

"From Solomon, with his God-given wisdom

and his despairing cry 'all is vanity and vexation of spirit'—while his subjects were plotting rebellion under their grievous burdens—all the way down through the ages of experiments under despotism, constitutional monarchy, republic, or what not, our race have never yet found the one prize that is worth striving for—*contentment*! Why have we missed this jewel, which is above all price? Because our race have pursued false quests, chimeras, first of one sort, and then of another, like phantom oases that the weary traveller sees in the desert, the which when he reaches he finds are only heaps of waterless sands! sands that only vanish the faster through his fingers the harder he tries, in his despair, to grasp them.

"Not so with this pre-Adamite tribe, shut off from the danger of being smitten with the incurable passion for change. Here I found *true* democracy combined with *true* conservatism, or shall I say a true theocracy? The lust of change has never dawned upon their contented minds. You call this ignorance! Oh, ye miserable creatures, tumbling over each other in your mad, mistaken quests! *this* is true wisdom! beyond all the philosophy that was ever taught by ancient or modern school. We started the

false search for happiness and safety, on the plains of *Shinar*, by trying to build a tower of '*bricks and slime*, whose top would reach unto heaven.' *Bricks and slime to reach unto heaven!* We look back upon that episode with a spasm of shame! but the race have been trying equally foolish schemes, one after another, ever since, and with the same disastrous result—*division.*"

Here Wynyard paused a bit, saying in his sweet, old-fashioned way that he was afraid he was giving me too much of a sermon. But upon my assurance that I wished him to go ahead exactly as the thoughts occurred to him, he laughed and said, "You are just the same good, patient old boy you always were when you listened to all my yarns of pirates and other interesting gentlemen, which our schoolmates would pronounce 'bosh,' as they dispersed in various directions in the dear old Devon woods, bent upon better entertainment than I could afford. Well! I have no doubt when you could hang so eagerly upon those old make-up yarns, you will kindly listen with some degree of interest to the true tragedy of my strangely broken life. But I have not yet quite done with my preaching. St. Paul told his young friend Timothy that 'Godliness with content-

ment is great gain.' You observe that the aphorism clearly states that even godliness must have contentment before it is 'great gain,' and that is what nations have *never*—and individuals have *seldom*—possessed under the system mistermed *civilization*, but which has only been from age to age,

> 'The simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.'

"In what way the people of Araucaca achieved their present happy system is a mystery, but one thing is certain, they did not achieve it by stimulating unrest and a vain craving for things and acquirements which are utterly worthless in themselves, and in whose pursuit the mind and body of youth deteriorate, and, what is even worse, imbibe altogether false ideals!

"The first years of my sojourn in the valley I spent contentedly enough. The beautiful country, the gentle, attractive character of the people, the freedom from anxiety, and the pleasant daily intercourse with my host and his family (I had learned the language fairly well), all contributed to make my life, if not exactly happy, at least in a measure contented.

"My fourth year I devoted to an extended

exploration of the valley. My kind host deputed as my guide his nephew, a fine young man of a little over twenty, intelligent and I need hardly say good-natured, for all these people possess that invaluable characteristic.

"As I had already navigated the lake in all directions, I determined on this expedition to keep near the mountains, making ascents here and there at the most inviting points.

"I and my young friend were over a year in circumnavigating (if that word is allowable) the valley, besides examining every extensive ravine to its utmost limit. In this way I fully proved to my own satisfaction that the valley of Araucaca is so walled in by impassable barriers that ingress or egress by the mountains is impossible. In fact, the valley lies in such a wilderness of inaccessible snow-clad peaks, that explorers have never dreamt that such a paradise could possibly exist in those vast, inhospitable regions. When I returned to Haseca's house, after my long, but most pleasant wanderings, I told him in the course of our interesting talks that I had quite satisfied myself that the valley was perfectly safe from invasion by way of the mountains. This, my host said, was well known to their engineers. But there had always

existed a belief that their remote ancestors entered the valley from the *earth.* This tradition had gradually become merged into a mystical form, viz., that the parents of the race were, in the beginning of time, created of the red clay on the margin of the lake by the Great Spirit whom they worshipped.

"Perhaps I have not mentioned that many of the household articles in common use are made of gold. The people are also very expert in the manufacture of beautifully fine pottery, of such unique shapes and lovely colours as would ravish the heart of an old china virtuoso to behold. That gold was abundant was evident from the profuse way in which it was used, not only in various domestic articles, but on doors, and about boats, as we use brass or tin. Another strange and mystical purpose to which an immense quantity had been applied, was the erection of a solid golden cross in every one of the twenty-four villages in the valley.

"The cross stands in what the Spaniards call the *Plaza*, and what these people call the *Alaukii.* This is an open space planted in the centre with shrubs and flowers, always kept in perfect order by members of the community in rotation. The cross is set in a great block of

granite which is laid on a solid foundation of stones and cement, the top being four feet above the surface of the ground. On this block the cross is erected. It is eight feet in height, ten inches in thickness in all parts, and, in its fine proportions and beautiful simplicity, it is the fairest memorial I ever beheld. On the four sides of the great block of granite there are affixed splendid plates of gold and bronze. On these plates—engraved in beautiful hieroglyphics—are the following incontrovertible legends:

"'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'

"'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

"'Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands.'

"'Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.'

"These crosses (which have stood there for many, many hundreds of years) are without scratch or blemish, as fair and beautiful as on the mysterious day they were erected. No hand of man, woman, or child is ever laid irreverently upon those sacred symbols, and, in passing, a respectful salute is made, and at least one—if not all—of the aphorisms repeated.

"Of course, I was naturally much interested in the history of these emblems of our faith, and I asked one of the council of learned men to explain when, and in what wonderful way, the cross reached Araucaca. My friend said that somewhat over eighteen hundred years ago, according to the records, a man of a noble and stately carriage came to their land, and taught them many wise and beautiful lessons.

"Whence he came, or how he came, no one ever knew. The first day in the valley he spoke their language with an accent and form so enchanting that people listened enraptured to the mere music of his voice, while their souls were inspired by the wisdom of his teaching. He journeyed from village to village, instructing the people in various things —health of body and soul, science and art. But the gem of all his teaching was the wonderful philosophy, the outward, ocular demonstration of which he engraved upon the many crosses he caused to be erected. This was no great labour for a people with abundance of gold at their command. Each cross is of pure gold, hewn from the solid mass in the rough, then worked into perfect form and beautifully polished. Abundance of the material,

plenty of willing hands, and skill to direct the work, explained to me what was at first a great mystery.

"Their spiritual teacher had told them that without this visible, tangible evidence constantly before their bodily vision, their spiritual sight would, in after generations, grow dim and gradually decay. In which case internal disorder would ensue, the strong would oppress the weak; evil, in all its hideous forms, would overtake them; hate, distrust of each other, misery of mind and body, would take possession of them, then decay, and final annihilation.

"After long and loving labour their teacher bade them farewell, and they saw him no more. Ere he left he warned them again and again that if they strictly practised the admonitions on the cross their nation would endure, but if they failed to do so, then their race would perish. Who this teacher was, whence he came, and whither he went, are mysteries. But the golden crosses, with their aphorisms as inflexible as the north star, remain to this day, testifying to the truth of the teacher who proclaimed them by the lasting effects of his teaching.

"In connection with these mystical crosses I

may say that they indirectly saved my life when I first entered the valley. When I was found by my afterwards kind friend and host, Haseca, swift runners were sent to the Learned Council to decide whether I should simply be left to die, or saved alive for future examination. The vote was on the side of mercy, and for a very strange reason, viz., the sign of the Cross tattooed on my right arm in blue ink. How it came there was as follows."

Chapter IV

"When I was at Harrow there was a strange, dreamy, mystical lad there, Mylor Carcleu by name. I think he came from Helstone—I know he came from somewhere in Cornwall. He was an exceedingly clever lad, always on good terms with the master. The fact was it seemed to be no trouble for him to do lessons; he only had to look at a book and he knew all about it. But the strangest thing about him was his spirituality. It was nothing sentimental or acquired; he must have been born with a mystically religious mind. He became the leader of a small, select set of us boys. We used to meet

in his room to discuss, or rather to listen to him discussing, spiritual subjects. He had the knack of putting almost any matter in an interesting light. One subject he had much at heart was the history of the strange, lonely, Cornish crosses scattered all over his native county. He had a theory regarding these silent reminders of the past, whether founded on any authority, or only evolved out of his own fertile brain, I am not antiquarian enough to say. However that may be, Mylor Carcleu's story was to the following effect.

"'It was a fact well known to the ancient church, although latterly lost sight of, that St. Paul came to Britain shortly after his missionary tour in Greece. After many adventures and hairbreadth escapes by land and sea he landed at Holy Isle, Northumberland. It was not called "Holy Isle" then, nor was it by any means a holy place. The fierce Picts worked their cruel will in those old days, and they would have slain Paul when he landed but for a strange incident. The Pictish governor of the isle ordered a soldier to slay Paul, and the man essaying so to do, instantly fell down dead at the Saint's feet, with his sword half-drawn from the

scabbard. The miracle was witnessed by the whole village, and deeply impressed the minds of those wild people. But instead of profiting by what they saw, and not knowing what was for their great good, they besought him—as the brutish Gadarenes had besought the Lord Himself—to depart from their coasts. This Paul promptly did, shaking the dust from his feet as a testimony against them. He then travelled southward, preaching the Gospel as he had opportunity. After founding a church at Glastonbury, he continued his mission into Cornwall. Joseph of Arimathea followed St. Paul some ten years later, and coming to the *Isle of Avalon*, "where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow," planted his thorn staff, commanding it to bloom every Christmas-tide — a pretty but useless miracle, and Mylor Carcleu was careful to inform us that this story of the thorn staff can only be a fable, because true disciples of our Lord never performed *useless* miracles.

"'Coming into Cornwall, Paul found the land inhabited by a fine race of men, but they were sorely oppressed, and held in the most degrading bondage by a fraternity of powerful and ferocious giants. St. Paul, with his astute mind and zealous heart, soon perceived that if he could,

by the grace of God, convert these monsters of cruelty, he would be able to induce the whole land to accept Christianity.

"'Thinking thus deeply over the matter he came to the great castle of the king of the giants. Contrary to the modern belief, the giants did not live independently of each other; in such a case they would not have been nearly so powerfully dangerous. Instead of each giant being a law unto himself, and doing that which was pleasant in his own eyes, every one of them bore the most unquestioning allegiance to Maanhann, king of the whole tribe.

"'St. Paul learned all these facts as he approached Cornwall; so when he reached the town where the king of the giants abode, he made straight for his palace, a thing which common-sense people never did voluntarily; for of those who entered few ever came forth again. But Paul was one of the sort with *un*-common sense, and that made all the difference. As he crossed the threshold he said, "Peace be to this house," as he had been taught by his holy Master to say when he entered any dwelling, high or low. Paul said this in the language of the giants, for he, like all the Apostles, had received the gift of tongues. The King was so

utterly astonished to hear a stranger speak fluently the language which was peculiarly sacred to the giants, that he treated Paul with much respect, instead of ordering the royal cooks to serve him up as a side dish at the family breakfast next morning—the usual fate of all strangers who were unfortunate enough to find their way to the palace.

"'The Saint abode quietly with the King for many days, entertained at the royal table, which was an honour that had never been conceded to any stranger before. Of course the table was sumptuously supplied with sheep and oxen, swine, and other things, which it is better not to enumerate too precisely; together with tons of bread, vegetables, and splendid brown pasties —a foot or so square—of which the King was very fond, nibbling half a dozen or so, just to pass the time between the courses. But amid all these tempting delicacies Paul confined himself to bread and water, making no remarks. For he remembered what his Lord had said, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth." So he kept quiet and bided his time, as all wise men do, and it came to pass in this wise.

"'King Maanhann had several daughters,

fine looking ladies, not one less than ten feet in height. But he had only one son, and he had been born with a deformed body, but, strange to say, a wonderfully astute mind. He was now over twenty years of age, and had never been able to walk. One day St. Paul saw this youth lying on a sumptuous palanquin in the King's garden, under the shade of a great apple tree, attended by a bodyguard of four giants, who stood at a little distance, silent and respectful.

"'The King had often spoken to Paul about this poor lad, his only son, saying that he himself was advancing in years, and in the nature of things must soon pass away, and leave his kingdom to this poor creature, who was not only a sorrow but a disgrace, unable to walk, and no bigger than a common hind of the country.

"'After this friendly confidence of the old King, Paul took every opportunity to converse with the young man upon the sacred subjects that were dearest to his, Paul's, own heart. In this way he soon made a deep impression on the poor young prince's mind.

"'Saint Paul sympathized very sincerely both with father and son in their great affliction. Perhaps he felt most deeply for the poor old

King in his distress. He tried to comfort him with the usual platitudes which have been in common use since the world began, viz., that things might have been much worse; that the lad might have been an idiot as well as a cripple; that he might, if he had been well and strong, have rebelled against his father, as Absalom did against his father, and was the occasion of the most bitter and despairing cry that was ever uttered by human lips.

"'This talk so interested the King that he had Paul relate the whole story of David's life, and from that to other things the poor old giant became so deeply affected that he was ready to say, as another King had said to Paul far away in beautiful Jerusalem, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Then Paul fired his effective shot. If he had tried to do so before he prepared the King and his son, they, and all the giants would only have said, "Wonderful magic!" For you must know that all the land of Cornwall was saturated with magic in those days, and their wise men really did some wonderful things, as Pharaoh's magicians did in the days of Moses and Aaron. But one thing was beyond their power, and has been beyond the power of all magicians in all ages and countries

—*the gift of life*! This has been sternly withheld from Satan and his emissaries.

"'After some days of prayer and meditation, Paul asked the King to assemble his chiefs and nobles that they might learn who was the true God, and that His power was omnipotent. The King at once sent his heralds north, south, east, and west, commanding all chiefs and nobles who bore fealty to the King of Cornwall to assemble at his palace at Truro, on the banks of the river Fal, with all due haste and seemly dispatch. This mandate was promptly obeyed, and in the course of a week or so chief after chief, noble after noble, arrived with their guards and attendants. When all were assembled, it was a gay sight. Some of the very highest nobles were provided for in the palace, but the great majority camped about under the splendid oaks which in those days covered that part of the country. As the Chronicle says, it was a gay and goodly sight when all these splendid men were marshalled around the great old King; each *one* of them easily capable of pulling a *hundred* of the ordinary hinds of the country over the line in a tug-of-war, a game all classes were very fond of in those primitive days.

"'When all were gathered together, Paul

stood forth in the midst and commanded the attendants to bring the King's son, which they did. The poor lad was pale with excitement, but his eyes were glittering with hope; for Paul had been instructing the young man in the Gospel of our Lord, especially in the mysterious promise, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

"'There was a profound stillness as Paul took the prince by the hand, and said in the giant's own language, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who died upon the Cross for thee, and for me, arise and walk!" And the lad leapt to his feet with a strange, wild, glad cry, and fell upon Paul's neck, weeping with such a great joy as can only be expressed in tears.

"'Then the vast assembly fell upon their knees, and would have done Paul reverence and worship had he not sternly commanded them to desist, and to worship Him who died upon the Cross for all mankind. These poor simple giants were so deeply impressed that, instead of attributing the miracle to hypnotism or will power (as an educated modern audience would do), they became converted at once, and entreated Paul to baptize them then and there, which he did with great joy.

"'The old King became a very zealous Christian, and completely changed his mode of life. And, whereas he had been the most cruel and bloodthirsty of all the kings in the world (and that is saying a good deal), he became the most gentle and kind. He took a great interest in, and had a great reverence for, the *Cross*. He prayed three times a day before a cross which he and Paul erected in the courtyard of his palace, and commanded all his household to do likewise. Then as a reminder to his subjects all over the land of Cornwall, he caused to be erected stone crosses in towns, villages, and hamlets, and also at all cross-roads, many of which, silent witnesses to King Maanhann's pious zeal, remain to this day.'

"Such was Mylor Carcleu's version of the origin of the mysterious, silent, Cornish crosses, and I don't know but that it is as good as any other. Be that as it may, his story so worked upon our boyish feelings—there were about a dozen of us in his set—that he induced most of us to have a cross tattooed on the right arm as an emblem of our faith.

"The process was very simple. A good stout needle, a steady hand, and a little blue ink, were all that was necessary. The only incon-

venience was a week or two of a rather stiff arm, which our good old master attributed to a little too much indulgence in cricket.

"Mylor Carcleu's pretty little story had just sufficient romance about it to fascinate a lot of imaginative lads, and we all became his devoted followers. I think upon the whole that he did us good. This I know, that at least half a dozen of our set are now doing England's hard work in various outlandish parts of the world, for the good and glory of the Empire and to their own high honour, if not to their bodily comfort.

"This mark of the cross saved my life when I was found by the Indians in the valley of Araucaca, they holding the symbol sacred. But, alas! how much better for me had I passed in that delicious swoon, with the breath of flowers, like the odours of Paradise, soothing my weary brain. I know now why I was spared. The cup of Lawrence Percival's wickedness was not yet full—the day of his grace was not yet past!

"After six quiet years, during which my past life had become like a faded dream, the terrible longing of unrest came upon me, and I told my good friend and host that I must submit to my relentless fate. He, good man, argued with me,

pleaded with me, almost coerced me, but all to no purpose. My destiny lay forward, and forward I had to go. When Haseca fully realized my state of mind he calmly acquiesced, and began to prepare such things as I would require on my journey.

"Of course I had been more or less curious, during my stay in the valley, to see the source from whence all the vast amount of gold was obtained. I had sometimes approached my friend Haseca on the subject, but he either changed the conversation to some new topic, or dropped into total silence. One day, however, when I was more persistent than usual in my inquiries, he sat down and solemnly told me that their *Teacher of the Cross* had warned them never to discover to any save members of their own nation, or one who had proved himself absolutely loyal for many years, this wonderful source of wealth. After this I refrained from mentioning the subject, as I felt quite sure that my friend would show me the mine, if it were possible, in due time. And this he did after I had proved my loyalty to him and his people for six long peaceful years." Mark paused a little, thinking. Then he proceeded: "I would not tell even you of this vast source

of wealth if I did not feel convinced that though all the greedy gold-seekers in the world hunted till doomsday they would never find the passage to Araucaca.

"One morning, shortly before I left the valley, Haseca, with two members of the Council and six engineers, invited me to visit the mine—'The Shadow of the Sun,' as it is poetically called.

"At the foot of a lofty spur of the Andes on the eastern side of the valley, we came to a sheer wall of rock, which I judged to be at least a thousand feet in height, and with no vestige of an entrance of any kind. My friends requested me to examine the wall closely for any sign of a door, but my search was fruitless on that perfectly smooth surface. Taking me back some twenty or thirty paces they blindfolded me for I should say eight or ten minutes, and then led me forward on what I knew by the feeling was a smooth, level road. The bandage being removed, and my eyes becoming accustomed to the brilliant light of scores of torches set in various parts of the vast cave, I beheld the most gorgeous sight in the way of gold that ever dazzled mortal eyes. For some two hundred yards long and fifty wide there

extended a level floor of solid gold. The cave was at least twenty feet in height, and all around, about ten feet above our heads, the torches were arranged to light up the glittering expanse. The receptacles for torches were placed so as to afford the most convenient light to the people when they came to take gold from the mine; which, I learned, was once a year. All who desired gold for any purpose came at the appointed time with their tools and took whatever quantity each might require. Gold, being only an article of domestic use and ornament, is never hoarded. In fact those people have certain kinds of porcelain, much more highly prized than cups of gold, such fine pottery being more difficult to manufacture, and so much more fragile, and therefore more liable to loss, than articles made of gold.

"As I said, torches were arranged in double lines from end to end of the cave, and when these were lighted the wide expanse shone with a brilliance beyond all description. It was not in the least like the usual gold mines which were common enough in the palmy days of California and Australia, where one could see bits of the precious metal sticking in the rock here and there. This was absolutely a

cave of pure gold, and nothing but gold! All that the miner had to do was to cut out lumps large or small, according as he intended to melt it, or to manufacture some article from the virgin ore.

"As I walked through the wonderful cavern, with the flaming torches high on either hand, and the splendid metal glowing more gorgeously than ever mad alchemist saw in his wildest dreams, I was utterly dumbfounded with simple childish wonder and delight. No passion of avarice crossed my mind. I never cared much for money at any time of my life. But the splendour of all this vast undeveloped wealth was so far beyond all I had ever seen or heard of, that it made my nerves tingle, and dazzled my very soul with the glory of it.

"I asked my friends if they had never touched the rock in their excavating. They smiled, knowing that I referred to the possibility of exhausting the gold. They then showed me several door-like slabs of solid gold in various parts of the cave, which, when removed, disclosed narrow tunnels many hundreds of feet deep. Some of these were cut on a perfect level, some at an angle of forty-five degrees upwards, others on the same incline down-

wards. These tunnels had been made for the purpose of testing the depth of gold, but the limit of the metal had not yet been reached! The mine had been worked, according to written records, for more than two thousand years. And if it were worked at the same rate as hitherto, it would take ten thousand years, excavating evenly all round the cave, to reach the end of these tunnels. Of course how far the gold extends beyond the limit of the tunnels is a matter for future investigation. I was told that it is in contemplation to line the building which is devoted to the safe keeping of the records of the nation with plates of pure gold, for the sake of light and cheerfulness. If this were done, my friends said it would only take two feet from the mine all round, which of course would be a mere bagatelle.

"Upon remarking how perfectly pure the air of the cave felt, I was told that perfect ventilation was obtained by means of a narrow shaft, cut in the form of a staircase from the roof of the cave to the open face of the cliff, which rises sheer and solid for more than a thousand feet over the door of the cavern. The shaft is about five hundred feet in length; more than half of this distance is through solid gold, then the

gold abruptly ceases, and the remainder of the staircase is cut through peculiarly beautiful formation, which, the engineers told me, must have been flowing lava in the far past when South America from end to end was an awful mass of raging volcanoes.

"As I said a little while ago, when my friend Haseca became fully convinced that I must leave the valley, he thoughtfully provided such things as he knew I would require on my journey. He offered me as much gold as I liked to take, but gold being too heavy to carry in addition to the food, gun, and clothing which were actually indispensable, Haseca suggested that I should take some diamonds, as he had heard me say that these stones were highly prized by the strange, and as he thought, foolish peoples, of whom I had often spoken to him. This struck me as a clever idea; not in the least from a mercenary feeling, for I never had a bit of that, but I realized the fact that when I came among *civilized people*—God save the mark!—I should probably starve if I had not the wherewithal to pay for my crust of bread. When Haseca found that I approved of his kind offer he was highly delighted, like a child when you earnestly enter into some pretty romance of the

vast wealth of a pile of bits of broken delf. He would fain have loaded me with stones enough to buy out the Bank of England; but half a dozen, about the size of hazel-nuts, I knew would provide for all my requirements. I subsequently sold these stones to a Jew in Valparaiso for forty thousand pounds, and I have no doubt he doubled his money when he sold them in Europe. Of course there is a good deal of risk in cutting large diamonds, they may splinter, as I think lapidaries call it.

"When I had made all my arrangements I took a sad farewell of my friends. They are not a demonstrative people, but even they were deeply affected, and I must say that it was one of the hardest partings I ever experienced.

"My host and three of the chroniclers accompanied me to the entrance of the underground passage, by which I had entered the valley. Here they pitched tents, and we rested a couple of days. My friends calmly assured me that they would expect me to return within a year, and finally cast in my lot with them. Then they told me the astonishing fact that shortly after my arrival in the valley, their most skilful engineers had made a careful examination of the passage by which I had come, and found that

the entrance to the tunnel was five hundred feet lower than the outlet in the valley, so that water would flow freely from the valley outward. Upon this the engineers advised, as a precautionary measure for the future, to turn the water of the river Karimak, which flows near by, into the tunnel. The perpetual rush of such a volume of water would render invasion impossible. To my utter amazement the engineers showed me that all the rock cutting for this great work was already completed; there only remained some twenty feet of comparatively soft rock cutting to allow the mighty force of water to rush into the cave. The river had been tapped at a point some five hundred feet above the entrance to the tunnel, for the purpose of obtaining a great force of water, and also to follow a line of solid rock-bed through which to cut the water-lead, a most important consideration in a permanent water-way. The work was beautifully finished, and it was simply marvellous to see such splendid work done with the primitive tools and crude engineering instruments, water-levels, etc., which this people possessed. The engineers estimated that one-third of the river would be sufficient to keep the tunnel full, after the whole of the lateral

caves had been thoroughly flooded. This they calculated to do with the full force of the Karimak in two or three months from the time of turning in the water. When the intricacies of the tunnel were all filled, and only the narrowest passages were receiving and discharging water (which state would be indicated by the water at the mouth of the tunnel banking up) the supply would be regulated by a cleverly arranged system of gates, which were already built and in position.

"I had been nearly seven years in Araucaca and yet in all that time I had not known that this gigantic work was in progress. The immense labour and skill required to bring such a vast volume of water upwards of ten miles through solid rock, and in many parts along the face of precipices, which made one giddy to look at, was astounding. And yet, to my certain knowledge, the ordinary everyday work and recreation of the nation had not been disturbed in the slightest degree. So wisely was every detail of government arranged—if one may use such a phrase where no governor, king, or president exists—that not one soul felt the pressure of extra labour or the slightest curtailment of his leisure.

"My friends, after showing me the whole work, explained that it had been completed two years previously, but they delayed turning on the water until such time as I proved that I had identified myself with them by taking a wife and having a house built; in short, assuming the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. None of these things I had done. And, although the advantages of becoming a citizen had been explained to me with the most patient care, yet with infinite delicacy and tact, these wise people refrained from urging me in the least against my will. It was certainly not for want of mutual liking that I did not cast in my lot with them and forget the outside world and all the weary past. That they trusted and liked me I had many proofs, and that I was deeply attached to them my heart knew full well. But the fever of unrest, clouding common sense, urged me irresistibly to my destiny, and—here—I am! But," continued my poor friend, "I must finish my story, and you can make what you like of it *after I am gone.* One thing I am not afraid of, which is, that by no possibility could all the engineers in the world discover Araucaca. The sentinel peaks of the fierce Cordilleras will guard that happy

land from the invasion of a false civilization with its curse of the lust of gold. As for approach by the tunnel even if men could discover—what they cannot—which among many rivers is the one from Araucaca, all their puny strength and skill could never penetrate against that strong, fierce flood. And, if by some miracle they did, thousands of brave, strong men would crush them like half-drowned rats in a trap, ere their blinded eyes could perceive the loveliness of that glorious land.

"I parted from my good friends with many sorrowful farewells. They, kind souls, would fain have loaded me with wealth beyond a king's ransom, but I contented myself with Haseca's six diamonds, which I knew would provide me with all the money I would ever require. I carried sufficient concentrated food to serve me in the tunnel. I reckoned that with my knowledge of the passage, and the much finer tapers —made from the wax-palm—with which I was now provided, that I should get through in considerably less time than before.

"As a last mark of affection and trust they pledged their sacred word not to turn in the river for one full year and a day, in case I should weary of the other life, and decide to re-

turn and cast in my lot with them. Loving souls and true! I pray that the good God will preserve them from all evil contact, and continue them in their wise simplicity, until He, in His own good time, shall end men's confusion and madness, and bring order and peace out of all earth's chaos and misery.

* * * * *

"I will pass over my hard, wearisome journey towards the coast. It took me three months to reach the northern shores of lake Titicaca, situated near the southern boundary of Peru. It is said to occupy the most elevated position of any lake of like extent in the world—nearly thirteen thousand feet above sea level. I came upon it in the full blaze of the noonday sun, and as I looked on its strangely opaque waters, with its peculiar coast-line and islands, I thought Titicaca one of the most picturesque sheets of water I had ever beheld. However, I did not linger by the way; I was eagerly longing to behold once more the great Pacific, and refresh my lungs with its life-giving ozone.

"I pushed on to the coast and boarded an English coasting steamer at Arica, bound south for Valparaiso. I had not a dollar in coin, but I had my diamonds safely sewed up in my

poncho, which by the way was about the only article of clothing I had left. It was made of the very best Vacuna wool, spun and woven by my friends in Araucaca, and was a very handsome article indeed.

"The steamer people looked at me rather dubiously, and I was not surprised they did, for I was by means an attractive object. But I put a bold face on, and as politely as I knew how (I found it hard to get the right words after my long disuse of our tough language) told the captain that I was a British subject, that I had been exploring in South America, that I could raise funds in Valparaiso, and that I would pay my passage when I got there. The old skipper looked me all over, no doubt thinking me a *rara avis*, even on that coast of many derelicts. But my forlorn condition touching the tender spot that is in all British sailors' hearts, if you can only find it, he shook his head, and said: 'Maybe I'm an old fool, but let him pass, purser; the beggar may be telling the truth, though I very much doubt it.' It was only a deck passage I craved, so it was not much that the kind-hearted old captain risked, but his trust raised a little warm glow in my cold, lonely heart which was most refreshing. And when I paid

him my passage in Valparaiso, and begged him to accept a box of the best cigars I could find in town, I think we both felt a renewed hope for the final elevation of human nature in some dim and distant future.

"As I said, it was only a deck passage I asked, so when the captain and purser let me pass, I selected my narrow bit of deck room, and lay down with a stout old garrulous lady on one side, and a fierce, bandit-looking chap on the other. I passed a strange night with that laughing, merry, careless crowd; their singing and ceaseless talk making my nerves tingle with a strange excitement after my many months of utter loneliness and silence. I have always found the poor kind in their rude way to the poor, and on board the steamer 'Arequipa' I found them true to their usual character. They freely shared their by no means abundant supplies of food and drink with me, from whom, to judge by my appearance, they could hope for no return save thanks.

"I was a queer-looking customer as I walked into the British Consul's office on a fine sunny January morning in the year 189–. I had negotiated with a sailor on the steamer for a passable cap and a pair of duck trousers, paying him, as

I had paid the captain, with a promise. I knew the kind-hearted chap never expected to see a penny of my money, and it was a great satisfaction to think that I would soon have a bank account, and be able to draw real cheques. But that was yet in the future. At the moment I looked and even felt a most disreputable character, and it was a curious and by no means a pleasant sensation.

"The first person I encountered as I entered the office was a smart looking, properly groomed young fellow, with that peculiarly slow yet perfectly polite manner which all the British government breed possess. Whether they are born so and selected on that account, or whether they are caught in a wild state, and licked into shape afterwards, I have never found out—it is one of the things which the *Service* keeps a profound secret. But whether bred in the bone or acquired, there it is wherever the old Flag flies. This characteristic, moreover, combined with absolute honesty, is the reason why our diplomacy is, as a rule, successful both with civilized and savage peoples; markedly so with the latter, for your simple, unsophisticated savage is swift to know and appreciate when he is treated fairly and politely.

"I fancy that I rather astonished this *budding ambassador* to his august Majesty the Emperor of Germany, or the Czar of Russia, as the case may happen to be hereafter, by coolly asking to see the chief himself; but the youngster was game, never turned a hair, and calmly invited me to take a seat while he inquired if the chief was disengaged. In a little while I was conducted into the presence of the Consul himself, who greeted me kindly, even sympathetically, no doubt thinking that I was a specimen of the flotsam and jetsam of the 'lost' gentlemen tribe who are frequently cast up by the Pacific on to the South American coast. I soon disabused his mind of the idea that I was one of the worthless, distressed British subject sort, seeking help, by showing him my splendid collection of diamonds, and asking his advice as to the best way of turning them into dollars. His opinion of me evidently changed, but I fear rather less favourably. However, like his handsome, young subordinate, he held himself together bravely.

"He examined the diamonds carefully, and naturally asked where I had found such a splendid lot of stones. To this I simply replied that I was under a promise not to reveal the locality.

I feel sure that it required all his admirable command of voice, eye, and muscle to maintain his calm politeness. Nevertheless he did, and recommended me to two dealers in diamonds—one, a handsome old Polish Jew; the other, a little Frenchman, of no particular religion, unless a belief in the sacredness of money could be called such.

"At first I was well aware that both these gentlemen thought I had stolen the stones, and shrewdly concluded that I did not know their value—in which latter supposition, of course, they were quite right; but they erred in supposing that I was so anxious to sell that I would do so for a mere trifle. In this their wily, clever souls were quite at fault, and made a grievous mistake, as clever souls so often do, just by being a little too clever. If they had offered me at first half of what they gave me at last I would, in my ignorance, have jumped at the offer. And I have no doubt that the knowledge of this fact, which I carefully explained to them at the conclusion of the final sale, must have torn their shrewd souls with wild sorrow and regret.

"I was able, by depositing the diamonds at the Bank of Chili, to show my diamond buyers that

I was in no hurry to sell, and also to raise what money I required for present needs. The first thing I did was to get myself a good outfit of all necessaries, and many luxuries, besides taking comfortable rooms at the Hotel Valparaiso.

"It was a very curious experience, and if I were a philosopher, I could give you an instructive lecture on the versatile nature of man; how quite extraneous circumstances elevate or debase him, make him beautiful or ugly, lovable or hateful to his fellow creatures, altogether independently of any inward qualification of mind, soul, or body. In my lecture I would strongly insist upon the fact that what we call civilization, with all its buying and selling, getting and spending, etc., etc., does not tend to the growth of the soul, but rather to the dwarfing of that important part of man's complex nature.

"After awhile I accepted the Jew's offer of forty thousand pounds for the stones. Of course he and the Frenchman were in league, as the latter would not bid at all, and I have no doubt the pair doubled their money on the transaction. But it is still a mild satisfaction to me whenever I think of those two weeping and gnashing their teeth, while reflecting on the

bargain they missed for themselves by trying a little too persistently to swindle me.

"With my money in hand I cast about for a long time what I should do next. I thought of England, but the idea of home, with all its memories, had become hateful to me. I knew that my heart was broken, as they say, and it mattered little where I went; yet I could not go home, I felt that course was out of the question. I was strongly tempted for many days to send my money to those I loved in dear old Devon, return to my friends in Araucaca, cast in my final lot with them, and obliterate, as far as possible, my past life from memory. Looking back at it from a common-sense point of view, I think this would have been the most sensible thing to do; but it was not to be, and it was prevented by a mere trifle. No! that's a mistake, there are no trifles in this life."

Chapter V

"One day I was strolling by the water-side, and I happened to notice a smart-looking schooner yacht lying in dock, with a ticket in her main-rigging announcing that she was for sale. I

have always had a weakness for smart-looking topsail schooners, so I at once crossed the gangplank, and saluting the old sailor in charge, began inspecting the pretty little craft. As I say, I have always had a weakness for topsail schooners, although they are not so easily handled as fore-and-afters, do not claw nearly so fast to windward, and have the serious disadvantage of requiring men to go aloft to stow the 'flying-kites,' while your fore-and-after can be comfortably worked from deck. But in spite of all that I love a topsail schooner, and so I began with much interest to inspect the 'White Cloud.' I found her registered measurement was one hundred and thirty tons. She had been built for a yacht, and everything about her, from the keelson to the trucks of her raking spars, had been put in regardless of expense, and of the very finest materials. The saloon was amidships, with four state-rooms, all well-lighted and sumptuously furnished. The boom of her small foresail was so arranged that it swung clear of the awning, thus leaving the midship deck free from any disturbance in tacking or jibbing, and making it a most comfortable lounge or sleeping-place in hot weather.

"I found that the 'White Cloud,' like many

other things in this world, had a sad history. Her owner, Lord Compton, had been cruising in the far North for a year or two, and at Victoria he had decided to send the yacht south by the usual route, viz., a bit to windward of the Sandwich Islands, then hauling up to the eastward after crossing the line, but taking care to avoid the calm seas near the coast, to strike the westerly winds anywhere south of thirty degrees, and so run into Valparaiso.

"Lord Compton and his wife—they had just been married—started south by steamer, landing here and there as the fancy took them, intending finally to rejoin the yacht in Valparaiso. This was a good programme, as steam is an imperative necessity on the windless coasts of Ecuador and Peru. But, alas, the programme was never to be fulfilled. At Panama Lord Compton left his wife, and ran across to Colon to have a look at that 'wild-cat scheme,' the Panama Canal, in which he had some shares. That trip cost him his life, as it had cost many a poor fellow before him. Fever was particularly bad just then at that miserable hole of a place, Colon. Lord Compton was smitten with the fell disease, and died in three days. His poor wife took her sorrowful way home, send-

ing word to the Consul at Valparaiso to sell the yacht at once and settle any accounts which might have accrued. That was the sad little story, but I don't suppose that one man among the dozens who inspected the pretty little craft that day, I among the rest, gave a passing thought to the dead man and broken-hearted woman, who had so lately laughed and sang their love songs, 'as we sailed, as we sailed.' I said a little while ago apparent trifles change our lives. On Monday I was planning to return to Araucaca; on Tuesday, at one p.m., I was owner of the 'White Cloud,' arranging for a cruise which was to complete the tragedy of two lives, as far as this world is concerned, little as I dreamed it then.

"I paid three thousand four hundred and forty pounds for the yacht, and I think she was cheap, considering what a really fine craft she was, and also that she was fitted out with every requisite for a long cruise, having been thoroughly overhauled before leaving Victoria —rope, gear of every kind, two extra suits of sails, extra anchors, spare spars, etc., etc. All I had to do was to have her docked, repainted, and provisioned for a long trip; and last of all to decide where that trip was to be. After

some cogitation I decided to make the best of my way to Tahiti, then to the Marquesas Islands (one of the most beautiful archipelagos in the world), and afterwards slowly work my way north-west to Japan. That was *my* little programme, but you see," said my poor friend, "where I am now! and I know very well that my course was marked out for me before ever I laid compasses on the schooner's handsome charts.

"I found the Captain and crew a quiet lot of men. When I bought the yacht they came to me in a body, asking to be taken over with the schooner. I engaged them at once, thinking this a proof of steady character in the men, and a strong recommendation of the good qualities of the 'White Cloud,' for deep-sea sailors are, as a rule, rather shy of small craft.

"Everything being ready, I said good-bye to my many 'fair-weather friends' of the beautiful city of Valparaiso, and squared away with the land breeze on the early morning of May 21st, 189–.

"The breeze carried us clear of the coast, and then we caught a nice southerly wind which carried us to Juan Fernandez in forty-eight hours; that dot of land where Alexander

Selkirk spent his five lonely, but by no means unprofitable years.

"I say by no means unprofitable years, for we must conclude from the record of his quiet after life, in contrast to his rather stormy career before these five dreamy years, that the time of lonely communing with his God was decidedly beneficial to the soul of the silent Scotch sailor—who sleeps at last amid his kindred at Largs, after all his wanderings and strange adventures. As long as the charm of romance remains in this work-a-day world, Alexander Selkirk will have the undying fame of being the hero of the most fascinating story of adventure ever penned. But I may remark, *en passant*, that it was strange, and certainly a literary error of Defoe, to ship-wreck Robinson Crusoe on a mythical island near the coast of Brazil, when he had this beautiful isle ready made to his hand, with the immense advantage of being the real abode of his hero. Of course Defoe was too good a geographer not to know what he was about. The only solution is that his versatile mind was so imbued with stories of Turkish, Moorish, and Algerine rovers, who were the terror of the Mediterranean and African coasts in Defoe's days, that he started Crusoe on those seas.

Having commenced his story on the Atlantic Ocean, he did not see clearly how to transfer the scene to the Pacific. But it was certainly a pity, for it goes a long way towards giving the charm and fascination to such a chronicle as 'Robinson Crusoe' to lay one's hand figuratively, or rather in reality, upon the precise island and say, 'Here is the exact spot where these events took place! Here is the beach where poor Crusoe was cast by the cruel sea, all his companions gone! Here is the very cave where he built his fort and abode for more than twenty years, without once looking upon a human face, or hearing a human voice!' Such at least were my feelings as I dreamed away the calm, sunny autumn days on the shores of Juan Fernandez.

"We came to an anchor near to the spot where Selkirk had his abode. Here we spent a splendid week of fishing, shooting, and general exploration. At least, my captain and crew did. As for myself, I passed most of my time reading; I had been so long deprived of books that I fell ravenously upon the well-selected library which I bought with the schooner. But I fear that I also spent too much time in moody reminiscences, which habit of mind had, much to

my discomfort, grown upon me since I had come among my own countrymen again.

"After a week of this *dolce far niente* life, I ordered all hands on board, weighed anchor, and shaped a course for Tahiti.

"We had a favourable slant of southerly wind which carried us north, and after some days of rather wearisome calms and baffling, light airs, we struck fine strong trades in latitude 18° south. After that we had nothing to do but take the sun, cast up our reckoning, eat our grub, and trim sails the least bit in the world, as the trades veered a degree or two north or south.

"That run of three thousand miles, more or less, which occupied a little under three weeks, was the nearest approach to peace of mind (the meaning of the word happiness had faded from my brain) since—since—since you and I parted," said poor Wynyard, in a low voice. "You see," he continued, after a pause, "nothing really *bad* can happen at sea, no letters, no telegrams, no friends coming to say 'they are so sorry,' etc., etc. Nothing in sight save the grand old ever-changing, yet *changeless* sea, which carries you whithersoever you would, with gentle, loving arms, murmuring soft and low, like a lover, or,

with a sweep of resistless power, putting you to sleep for ever, without the agony of pain, or the lingering wearisomeness of slow disease. Would to God I had gone down—as I nearly did—in those beautiful coral seas! Many and many a time I thought how blessed it would be to slide down—down through its glittering depths, and be at rest for ever in its sapphire caves. But I did not know—though I dimly guessed—that my destiny was yet unfulfilled, and, until that was accomplished, there could be no permanent rest for me.

"As I said, we were running down our westing on the 18° of south latitude, and had nothing to fear until we approached 140° of west longitude, which would bring us within range of the Paumotu, or Low Archipelago, a very dangerous group, on account of being so low that they are undiscernible until the long line of surf appears on the reef, backed by the sombre cocoa-nut palms fringing the white, sandy beaches which encircle the lagoons. These lagoons, with their narrow entrances, are ticklish places to get into, but very safe and commodious anchorages when you manage to get in. The Paumotu group of islands extend some four hundred miles in a general direction north-west and south-east.

They are under the French, and are utterly worthless, excepting for two products, viz., copra (dried cocoa-nut), and the pearl oyster. Perhaps I may add to these *beche de mer* and sharks' fins, but pearl-fishing is the great lure which has enticed 'all sorts and conditions of men,' to these lonely sand-dunes.

"It is very curious and instructive to study how coral islands are formed. First of all the industrious little coral *polype* sets to work on some good foundation (wise little architect, 'which built his house upon a rock') and he builds steadily, though slowly, to the surface of the ocean. It is no matter to this builder how long it takes him to complete his work, a few hundreds of years more or less never disturb his well-balanced mind. He knows he will get there in due season, with the satisfaction of having completed a work that will last to the crack of doom. The fierce sea, 'which no man can tame,' may slowly wash away the muddy foundations of a continent, but all the wild force of ten thousand miles of ocean, leaping and tearing at a little coral atoll a few hundreds of yards in extent, cannot budge its foundations an inch. Once at the surface of the sea, the *polype's* task is finished; another arrangement

in the great economy of Nature comes into action. The flotsam and jetsam of the tropic seas drift on the coral reefs—among other things, the nuts of the cocoa-nut palms, the most useful tree, in its own way, in the world, for it yields food, drink, clothing, and many more necessities and luxuries to the happy denizens of the sunny South Sea Isles. The tenacious and rapid-growing cocoa-nut palms soon transform into habitable islands what would otherwise remain desolate invisible death-traps, sending gallant ships to sudden doom when sailing unsuspectingly over those summer seas.

"Before reaching Tahiti, I determined to call at one of the Paumotus, *Taupara*, lying 17.25° south. I took a fancy to see it for no other reason than that my captain, William Pasco, had been pearl-fishing there, many years before, in a Sydney schooner. His descriptions of the wonderful diving feats of the islanders, and the vast wealth of pearls sometimes obtained, rather whetted my curiosity.

"On our nineteenth day from Juan Fernandez, we changed our course half a point north—to west-north-west-half-west. We calculated that we would sight Taupara in a little less than four days if the trades held on, but the winds

are always more or less uncertain as you approach the islands.

"On the very day we changed our course, the glass began to fall, and the weather to look 'dirty,' as the sailors say. However, we did not think much about it, as the season of Equinoctial gales was past, and hurricanes are practically unknown in the Pacific so far to the eastward. Next day it was blowing half a gale of wind, and we were bowling along under close-reefed fore-topsail and fore-staysail, everything else made fast and snug. We got the sun all right that day, and little we thought that it was the last time some of us would ever see it. Our reckoning made us six hundred and forty miles from Taupara. If the stiff breeze held, and all went well, we calculated to make the island in about seventy hours.

"The glass kept falling steadily until it stood obstinately at 27.40—a disagreeably low mark in those latitudes. The weather held on about the same for the next twenty-four hours; then the atmosphere assumed a strange, dull crimson, yellowish hue, as if, just beyond the limited range of our vision, all the world was on fire There were no lights or shadows of flying mist, or rushing cloud-wrack, as in ordinary storms.

Only the sea showed any motion, the great waves thundering and hissing, as the fierce wind swept off their curling crests, sending the spray flying over our mast heads. Not for a moment did a star appear, or a streak of moonlight, although it was full moon. It was hard to realize that, only two nights previously, we had all lounged about the deck half the night, loath to turn in and miss the splendour of the moonlit ocean, an ocean which shone like the vision of some enraptured seer of eld, dreaming, in the weary desert, of the 'sea of pure glass.'

"On the second day of this queer weather it was blowing a living gale of wind, and the glass had again dropped two-tenths. I remember the date distinctly, June 25th, for it is my birthday, and in spite of all difficulties my poor steward had made a huge plum-duff in honour of the event; and it makes me smile yet when I remember not only the difficulty the steward had in making it but the difficulty we had in eating it, as we held on to any secure thing we could find, while the steward dexterously handed round flaming morsels of the viand.

"We had taken in every stitch of canvas excepting the double-reefed fore-topsail, and we would fain have taken in that also, but we had

made the mistake—which is sometimes made by the best sailors—of carrying it too long, and the smartest man in the ship could not venture on to the yard to furl the sail. If we let go the halyards and simply brailed up the sail, it was certain to shake the yard to bits, and very likely take the topmast with it. While the skipper and the mate (a fine old sea-dog of a fellow, who never conversed, in the ordinary sense of the term, only made himself understood by a few short growls) were considering the advisability of sending four men aloft, to run their knives along the bolt-ropes, and trust to the sail tearing itself free without further damage, just then, what we had feared happened; the sail split, with a report like a small cannon, and in a moment the yard hung in a tangle of gear, the sail, fortunately, whipping itself into ribbons. Before even an order could be given, two brave fellows sprang into the rigging, and at the imminent risk of their lives secured the two pieces of the broken yard to the mast, so that they would do no further damage.

"We would now have liked to do what we ought to have done sooner, heave to. But we dared not try it with the top hamper on the foremast, for, although the sail was gone, yet

the wrecked yard, with its tangle of bolt-ropes, which of course had not gone with the sail, besides the lines the men had used to make the yard secure, caught too much wind to permit us attempting rounding to, in such a mountainous sea-way, with any prospect of success. If we had brought the little craft broadside on to the hurricane force of wind and sea, she would have turned over like a child's toy.

"There was nothing for it but to scud under bare poles, and trust to out-running the gale, or, by a lucky chance, passing the island, and getting on the lee side, in which case we would run into smooth water in a moment. But in the *other case!*—Well! only one man in a thousand can pitch on to a coral reef in a gale like a hurricane and live!

"That night we changed our course half a point south in hopes of passing the south-east end of Taupara without hitting some nasty little dots of islands which lay thirty or forty miles south. After midnight the glass began to rise a bit, and, as all old seamen know, you are then very apt to get the worst of it. It is as if the storm-fiend knew that his revels were nearly over, and was determined to make the most of his time.

"By daylight on the 26th the sea was simply a dull mass of flying spume. If one looked to windward for a moment, one's face smarted as if pelted with salt and water from a powerful hose-pipe; we found, after a bit, that it was coral-sand that was flying in the salt spray. This was now the third day since we found our exact position by the sun, but by the ordinary log-line (our patent log had gone out of order, as patent things have a way of doing), we were in the vicinity of Taupara. As I say, we had no chance of taking sights during the last three days, but having kept strict dead reckoning, we knew that we were close to the island, but whether north, south, or square on, it was impossible to tell, owing to the arbitrary nature of the currents among all the island groups in the Pacific.

"By the sand in the flying foam we knew that we were getting into shallow water, and that safety or death was near at hand. The captain, mate, and I held a consultation, and decided that in case we found ourselves running on the *weather* side of the island, our only chance would be to beach the schooner, as it would be madness to attempt to *claw* off the land in the teeth of such a gale.

"In the smother of spray it was impossible to see fifty yards ahead, so it was hardly worth while to keep a look-out; but discipline was never relaxed, and there was always a man forward to report whatever he saw. At eight bells noon, a few minutes after the watch was changed, the end came. I remember it most vividly, and by no means unpleasantly! It was something like putting one's horse at a stiff fence in the hunting-field, not knowing what is on the other side, or the mad joy of rushing into battle. At such moments, action leaves no time for reflection, let alone fear.

"The skipper and I were standing by the companion-way, holding on to a rope which had been run across from rail to rail, as something secure to hold on to, if one fetched way while the poor little craft was leaping and shivering like a mad thing in the cruel storm.

"Of course the final catastrophe happened (as all such things happen) in less time than one takes to tell it. I saw the look-out man turn his face for a moment aft, holding on to the fore-stay with one hand, and pointing with the other, and I knew that he was shouting 'Breakers ahead!'—but no sound reached our ears, save the howling of the tempest. The

captain sprang to the wheel, although there were two men there already, but I knew that he feared they might, in this supreme moment, bring the schooner to the wind, while our only hope was to let her go landward as far as possible, so long as she held together.

"There was a sort of pause of everything for the space of time one might count five. The 'White Cloud' seemed to crouch low and lie still, like a tiger just before she springs. An awful mountain of water, towering over our taffrail like a wall, and just curling to break on the reef, actually sheltered us for a few seconds from the tearing wind. In those brief moments I saw the brave fellows at the wheel grasping the spokes with hands as firm, and watching the schooner with eyes as steady, as though they were running into Plymouth Sound, instead of plunging on to a coral reef which would crush our fragile craft like an egg-shell!

"That was the last I saw of my ship-mates. Then the mountain of water was upon us! The little schooner leapt forward, shuddering like a living creature in mortal agony, and I remember no more of the passing of my beautiful 'White Cloud' and sixteen brave men!"

Chapter VI

"I AWOKE lying on a native mat, with the sound of cocoa-nut fronds swaying and whispering in their peculiar way, and the far-off moaning of the surf, rising and falling with the ceaseless, sad monotone that surf always has in the tropics.

"I was bruised and battered, and for some days so confused in mind, that I could do nothing but vaguely conjecture what had happened. The natives treated me kindly, giving me a little food, and delicious cocoa-nut milk, as I could take it, and gently massaging my body —'Lomi-lomi'—the universal mode of alleviating pain in the Pacific.

"The soft trade wind crept through the cocoa-nut groves, laden with the breath of flowers and the ozone of warm southern seas, soothing with its tender touch my half-conscious body, and bringing that blessed sense of rest and peace which only those know who have passed through some great crisis of life and death.

"In the course of a week I was so far restored that I could move my body a little, and my

mind was quite clear. I learned from the owner of the hut—the man who had picked me up on the beach—that at first he thought I was dead—like all my ship-mates—but some faint signs of life had induced him to examine me closely, and finding that I was yet alive, he carried me to his hut, and slowly restored me to consciousness. The others were all dead, and it was a miracle how I reached land with a spark of life. Of the 'White Cloud' only shreds and fragments remained, scattered for miles along the beach. The natives told me that if we had only been two miles further south, we would have cleared the reef, and run into smooth water!

"One morning after I was beginning to regain my strength a bit, I saw a white man approaching my friend's hut. He walked with a strangely familiar gait, and, in spite of my weak bodily condition, my soul grew fierce and strong, as I saw before me, in his careless grace and strength, *Lawrence Percival!* He was a little older looking, but *debonair* and handsome as of old.

"The moment I recognized him I knew why I was there, and my wits went quickly to work! He little dreamt who lay before him, as he sat

down and saluted, in the careless manner white men acquire in the unconventional island life. 'Shipwrecked, comrade?' said he. 'I only returned to my place here yesterday. I have been absent for more than a month, fifty miles to the north, collecting pearl-shell. If I had heard of your misfortune sooner, I should have had you removed to my place, where I could have offered you a few more comforts than you have had here. However, I am glad to see that old *Kapuna* has pulled you through wonderfully well. But, after all, white men require the society of white men, no matter how kind the brown creatures may be. As our poet shrewdly says

> 'For East is East, and West is West,
> And never the twain shall meet
> 'Till earth and sky stand presently,
> At God's great Judgement Seat.'

'So I will go now and send some of my fellows over with an odd, but really comfortable palanquin, which I sometimes use when I get extra lazy in this delightful, but enervating climate. Yes! that's the best plan, and my little island wife, *Kalani*, will be delighted to have another white man under her charge, for she has a perfect mania for nursing sick people, good little

soul that she is.' Thus he rattled on in his old easy, pleasant way, while a mad wave of passion took possession of my soul. But I remained perfectly calm and self-possessed, knowing well that Lawrence Percival's hour had come, and that I was the instrument, in God's hands, to fulfil His most righteous and just behest! I knew then, as I know now, that I had been brought to that particular, out-of-the-way spot of earth, for the purpose of fulfilling the task which had been given me to do. There was no question of wreaking revenge, *that* had never entered my mind. In fact, I had fervently desired to be kept away from this man, and to *dree my weird* to the end in peace, but that was not to be allowed.

"I suppose something in my face disturbed him, for he looked startled for a moment, and grew pale as he said, 'Are you a ghost? or are you really *Mark Wynyard* come to recall an unhappy episode, which you had far better forget? That *affaire d'amour* turned out badly for us all. The little "Wild Cat" is in a nunnery in Melbourne, enjoying religious solace, I hope, after nearly killing me!' He mechanically laid his hand over a long narrow scar which made a livid line from his cheek to his neck.

"The man must have seen danger in my eyes, but, no doubt, I seemed so weak and helpless in comparison with his great health and strength, that he put the idea from him as absurd. He turned his face for a moment to look at some man-of-war sailors who were sauntering along the beach, and with the instant perception of my opportunity, and with that resistless strength which men receive in some supreme crisis of life and death, I plucked the heavy sheath knife from his belt, and plunged it safe and sure into his heart! It was not five seconds after he ceased speaking until his heart ceased beating, and I fell back on my mat bed with an intense sense of relief. Why it should have been so I know not. I am only telling you a series of facts which have befallen me since you and I parted; their meaning is beyond my knowledge, therefore I attempt no justification or explanation. That will, and can only be, interpreted by a Tribunal from which nothing is concealed, and before which there can be no miscarriage of justice.

"Her Majesty's ship 'Swallow,' Captain N——s, happened to be in the lagoon, and some of the sailors who were ashore on liberty, saw what I did, and of course reported. In

the course of an hour I was formally apprehended and taken on board the ship. Captain N——s had instructions to take a run through the Ellice, Solomon, and New Hebrides Islands, to inquire into and punish, if necessary, some outrages which had been committed there; outrages, by the way, which had been perpetrated by the unfortunate islanders in revenge for diabolical cruelties practised upon them by rascally 'black-birders' (Pacific name for labour-recruiting vessels), and their no less rascally employers.

"We sailed next day, and after a cruise of nearly three months—during which I was treated kindly and considerately—we reached Port Philip, and I was handed over to the authorities, with the result which you know. And whosoever tries to change the sequence of that result, I shall hold him my *foe, not friend!*"

Over a grave, in an obscure corner of a suburban cemetery there is a plain, gray headstone, which I assisted a nun to select and put in place. On this there is only a name, with the dates of birth and death. On the foundation-stone, partly covered by wild flowers and ivy, are the following most blessed and consoling words:

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

AN IDYLL OF THE SOUTH SEAS

AN IDYLL OF THE SOUTH SEAS

I KNEW them both very well. I had known them since they were shy, wild little things who bolted out of sight whenever I came upon them suddenly. They were always pretty, as prettiness goes among native children, and laughingly sweet-tempered.

The boy, Kona, was about ten, and the girl, Roké, a few years younger, when I took their mothers into my domestic *ménage*, one as housemaid the other as washerwoman. Kona and Roké used to come trotting after their mothers every morning and go dodging about the place while their parents were busy with their household duties. Native children are quite different from white children in every way, and in some senses more attractive. They are perfectly

natural, never vulgar. You might as well call a little kid vulgar, and one can never quite realize that they are the same kind of human beings as ourselves. But all the same they are very lovable and immensely amusing.

As Kona and Roké became less alarmed at my presence, and could linger with less abject terror, at a respectful distance, while I spoke to their parents, they gradually fell into more sedate habits, and their features assumed more and more the calm expression of their race; and a very beautiful expression it is when they live their own natural life.

But the misfortune is that their old happy, simple existence is a dream of the past! With some things that are good, and that lead up to a higher life, the white race have the dire responsibility of having brought to that fair land and kindly people a great deal of evil and disaster.

Before the white man came to these unsophisticated people, and took upon himself, with the usual arrogance and self-sufficiency of the white man, the task of rearranging their domestic, spiritual, and governmental affairs, and generally fixing them up, willy-nilly, poor things! according to the ideas of the aforesaid white man, they

lived under a simple feudal system well suited to their clime and race. Now their lands have passed to strangers. Their sturdy pride of race has degenerated into a servile aping of what is least attractive in European modes and manners.

In addition the poor natives owe every disease from which they suffer (and alas! they are many and dreadful) to the foreigner. Before they were discovered and *civilized*, they only died of old age, or accident. So we can easily imagine that the people of those lands have small reason to thank the white race for what in these modern days is termed "benevolent assimilation."

But to proceed. It was a rather lonely life I led in a far outlying district. In my public and private capacity I had complete control of everything and everybody. I purposely leave the locality indefinite; suffice it to say that it was in the Pacific. There were from five to six hundred people in the district. As in other communities, some were good and some the reverse, but I am happy to say that their badness never amounted to wickedness as we understand the term. Serious crime was quite unknown, their principal weakness being an

occasional infringement of the seventh commandment, and a propensity to tell white lies.

Upon the whole it was a very happy community. The men cultivated the soil and fished, the women were good housewives and kind mothers according to their lights. Practically there was no poverty and no luxury in the district. For several years after I took command there was hardly any sickness, so that upon the whole, it was a very contented lot of people I had to manage, and as time went on and I came to know them, and they learned to trust me and come to me with their little difficulties and troubles, I may say that mutual liking and a peculiar childlike affection grew up on both sides.

So the years slipped past, as years are in the habit of doing. Kona was eighteen or thereabout, and Roké a shy, pretty girl of fifteen. They and their parents had lived near me all these years as part and parcel of my establishment. They were good, industrious young people, and enjoyed the esteem and affection of all their friends, and their friends were the whole community. Indeed, no one could help liking the bright, smart lad who was always ready to oblige any one, diligent in his work

and yet full of fun and frolic. As for Roké, she was held up by all the mothers in the district as a pattern for their daughters to follow. Obedient to her parents, clever in school, and an adept at all feminine craft, such as sewing or mat-making, she had also an accomplishment which was very highly prized in our society; she could turn you out a straw hat that would have made any young clerk madly envious on a bank holiday at Margate, or when punting on the Thames with "'Arriet."

I had a sincere affection for those two young people, and I watched the sunny opening of their lives with much interest. I knew very well that in the natural order of things there would be a match sooner or later made up between them. So when their parents announced to me that it was arranged, and that Kona and Roké were to be married in six months, I was quite prepared for the important intelligence. I was rather surprised at the length of the engagement, and much more so when I was told that it was Kona who had stipulated for a longer period of freedom than is usual according to native etiquette. Engagements with these people are as a rule "short and sweet," as the sailors say, and if there is any lengthened

period of probation, the proposal always comes from the parents, who, with their longer experience of life, know of some family feud or other which may develop; and in case it may cause trouble, they in their wisdom wish it to appear before the irrevocable step of marriage is taken. But in this case it was the young man who hesitated and proposed the long engagement, much to my astonishment and that of all his friends. I puzzled over the matter a while, chaffed Kona for his want of gallantry, and then dismissed the subject from my mind.

Two months or so after this, the visiting doctor of the district came on one of his half-yearly rounds, and as it was my duty to see that all the people turned out for inspection, I issued an order for men, women, and children to muster next morning. The real cause of the doctor's visit—which was a month earlier than usual—was the fear that that most dreadful scourge of the human race, leprosy, was in the district, and the government order was imperative that every case must be removed at once to the leper settlement.

The doctor was a humane man, as humanity goes in this world, but as inflexible as a stone wall in what he considered his duty.

An inspection was always a trying ordeal to the people, for they knew well that once the smallest sign of the dread disease was discovered, the irrevocable doom was "removal to the leper settlement." Then came the parting for ever from parent, wife, or child; never more to hear the old familiar voices, never again to look in the beloved eyes on this side of the grave! In each broken heart as it reached that dreadful settlement was whispered Dante's awful words:

"All hope abandon ye who enter here."

I remember that inspection well, I only remember one better, but that came afterwards. The doctor went patiently down the long line of silent people, carefully examining face, hands, and feet, as these are the parts where the disease usually first appears.

Presently I heard a low cry from where Kona and Roké were standing, and then the doctor told Kona to come into his room. The rest were all dismissed. Poor Kona was deadly pale, but quite calm, and stood the trying ordeal with that stolid manner which some thoughtless people think is want of feeling. Want of feeling, forsooth! I have seen such things done, and

heard such words spoken in the land I am writing about, that I have come to the conclusion that it is the white race who have the biggest share of real, downright callousness.

The doctor hesitated long over a certain little, most harmless looking mark on the left foot. He finally decided to leave the case until next inspection on condition that I would guarantee to keep the boy apart from all other people. This I readily promised as my heart was sore for the poor young couple whose lives seemed so bright yesterday, and to-day were plunged to the lowest depth of hell; for, to the native mind, banishment to the leper settlement is simply banishment to the infernal regions. The white race out there can take the matter much more philosophically, and in a calm, sweet, religious manner, simply because the aforesaid white race are not liable to the horrible malady, or rather so very slightly liable, that practically they look upon leprosy from the serene heights of immunity. Of course, this was all right to a certain extent, but if they had acted fairly, the white race would have remembered that the country belonged to the brown race, not to the white; and as they gradually gained power, not always by the fairest of means, they

would not have forgotten that they were really interlopers and were morally in the country upon sufferance, and not by any right. If the whites had only thought of these matters a little more, and had acted with less harshness and more consideration for the feelings and idiosyncrasies of what were really a very fine people in the beginning, there would be no hatred, and less sorrow, in the hearts of a kindly race who have been bitterly wronged.

So our inspection ended for that time, and the cool, level-headed doctor departed with, I think and hope for our common humanity's sake, a pang in his tough professional heart for the dire sorrow he had brought to light that day. Kona took up his solitary abode in a little grass-built hut under strict promise to me that he would not go beyond a certain boundary, or hold communion with any one except his mother who cooked and brought his food to a certain designated spot. I knew the lad would not break his parole, but I also knew that there was one who would hold communion with him in the friendly shadow of the star-lit nights in spite of all the precautions I could take. I knew this quite well when I made my promise to the doctor, and I have no doubt he knew it also.

But as leprosy is never contagious in its early stages (and it is even very doubtful if the disease is ever contagious in the ordinary sense of the term) I winked at the infraction of my rule and weakly hoped for the best, as we usually do when we get into a disagreeable position and don't know how to get out of it.

I knew now why Kona had delayed the marriage. He had evidently suspected the presence of the disease in his system, and, good lad that he was, he did not wish to add crime to his misfortune by marrying Roké. But even he did not know the metal she was made of, as we shall see a little further on.

So the daily round of life dropped into the old way, but in the apparent calm, two hearts were wild with despair, for added to the horror of the living death of the dreaded disease was the knowledge that each hour brought the day nearer which would part them for ever, and send Kona to his lonely vigil at the leper settlement, waiting and praying for death to end his misery; surrounded by ghastly objects in all stages of decay, only human in the sad melancholy eyes, the one feature which the awful disease leaves unchanged.

During the months of probation until the

doctor rendered his final judgement, Roké was, to my astonishment, apparently the least depressed of all Kona's friends. This surprised me more and more as the dreaded inspection approached. We all knew only too well what the final doom of the poor boy would be. He did not become (thank God!) so utterly unhuman as many lepers I have seen. That terrible change from the human to the ghoul, was perhaps to come later. But I hoped—it is the only hope left for the leper—that poor Kona would go to his final rest ere that miserable stage arrived.

One day about this time, I was out plover-shooting, and as I was cautiously creeping up to a pile of rocks to get a shot at the birds, I suddenly came upon Roké sitting on the grass engaged in doing what I have seen natives doing scores of times, namely, extracting prickly pear needles from her foot and ankle. When she saw me she blushed all over, jumped up with a little cry and ran away; but not so quickly as to prevent me seeing a nasty looking cut on her ankle. I called, asking what had hurt her, but she paid no attention, and swift as a frightened deer made a bee-line for the house.

I thought the incident strange at the moment,

as the natives had perfect confidence in me, and knew that I always did whatever I could to relieve their bodily or mental suffering. However, after a little reflection, I concluded that Roké had been startled in a foolishly childish way, and on the impulse of the moment had bolted.

The doctor was delayed over the official time of visiting our district, and it was fully eight months before we had the dubious pleasure of seeing him again. The usual inspection was ordered, and a general muster of the people took place. The natives are the most law-abiding people in the world, and a command of authority is obeyed implicitly. They might easily have refused to come for inspection, and as I had no adequate force to compel them, they might have refused to comply with an order which was repugnant to their most tender feelings. Certainly a white community would have defied both the doctor's authority and mine under the same circumstances.

As Kona's case was the only important one, he—poor fellow—was examined first. As I expected, it only took a few minutes to decide his fate—"removal at once to the leper settlement"—and he was placed under charge of a

constable, who was commanded to see the sentence carried out. Although I had known for many months what the end would be, yet I was horribly shocked when at last I saw the once bright, handsome lad in charge of the officer, never again to feel the blessedness of freedom until merciful death should hold out the kindly hand that is too strong (thank God!) for all the petty powers of this world to gainsay or resist.

Those who have not seen the native leper accept his doom, and prepare in his simple fashion for his last journey save one, can have no conception of the pathos of the thing; the getting of his little worldly effects together, disposing among his friends of such possessions as he can not, or may not wish, to take with him; doing all this with no great outward signs of grief, but, as I know full well, with the inward grief that kills. Ah, my dainty friends! ye who think it is *your* race who have a monopoly of feeling, I could tell you such tales of breaking hearts among the poor natives, as would harrow your hearts to their inmost core, if you *have* hearts, and make you lie awake o' nights with the grief and the horror of it all.

I looked at poor Roké expecting to see her completely broken down with the hopeless end-

ing of the examination, but I was astonished and shocked to see the hitherto gentle and loving girl, with a contented smile on her face, when all Kona's friends were torn with grief at the poor lad's fate.

The doctor passed down the long line of people. Roké was the last on the list, and as she had always been such a healthy girl, the doctor after looking at her face and hands, had almost passed her, when she, with an impatient gesture, thrust out her foot and called his attention to what any one else would have carefully concealed if possible. The doctor examined the ankle for several minutes, then rose, and stared her in the face. The timid girl never blanched a bit, but looked him dead in the eye with that peculiar look of courage and desperation which means death or life either in the human or the brute.

"Good God!" said the doctor under his breath, "I never knew that a human being could do such a thing! Constable," he called in his firm official voice (his voice had trembled a bit as he made his soliloquy), "constable, here is another leper; take her also": and Roké, with a smile of supreme love and triumph, passed over to Kona's side and took her place with

him. They belonged to each other now! No more separation "till death them do part."

"Doctor," said I, "what did you mean just now when you said that you never knew a human being could do such a thing?" "Don't you know?" said he in his cool way. "The girl made a wound in her ankle and infected herself with the *lepra virus*—which is the only certain way of taking leprosy. You know the reason why she did the awful thing? I will give up my billet," he continued. "I don't care to wake up in the middle of the night and see the ghosts of lepers round my bed." And he did! What is more, he left the country. Years afterwards I had a letter from him, when he had become a popular practitioner in an up-country town in Australia. He wrote that he never could quite banish from his mind the pain and the horror of the leper affair; and I am glad to know that he could not, for the sake of our common human nature. I have never been able to forget the sad affair myself, and whenever I hear the horrible word *leprosy* I think of the bright boy and girl, in what should have been the springtime of their lives, going to their irrevocable doom of a living death at the lonely leper settlement.

JACOB BUSBY, THE LINEMAN

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IN the hot and dreary month of July in the year 189–, it was my untoward fate to be on my way from San Francisco to New York. When I started from the city by the Golden Gate, I did not realize exactly how wretchedly hot and dusty the Sante Fé route would be at that season, or I would have taken the Canadian Pacific. But fate, or my own thoughtlessness, willed it otherwise—and this *otherwise* led up to a little incident which perhaps is worth relating as showing how what we may deem a trifling action sometimes leads to important results.

The train had left Barstow at 2 p.m. on the second day of our journey, and was toiling across the weary Mojave Desert. The stifling

air was perfectly motionless except as it was stirred by the rushing train; and then it was only a heavy conglomeration of alkali dust and lifeless atmosphere which struck one like a blast from the lower regions, parching the skin and stinging the eyes. The dead dreary level was unbroken save by the sturdy grease-wood bushes, and the dauntless yucca with its fierce thorn-tipped leaves guarding its delicate cream-tinted blossoms. There were absolutely no other signs of life, vegetable or animal. The bravest *coyote* and the most misanthropic jack-rabbit never dared to invade those miserable wastes. The only sign of animal life I saw that weary day—excepting, of course, our own company and one or two gaunt-faced linemen—was an eagle which hung an infinitesimal dot far, far up in the sky, where I knew he was enjoying ozone and coolness and a heavenly view, and probably smiling at us wretched creatures being dragged over the burning sand by an infernal engine, which added its quota of smoke and horrible soot to our other miseries. Many a long league away, yet seemingly near in that strangely clear dry atmosphere, the barren hills stood grim and uninviting. One instinctively searched in valley and cliff for any glimmer of

shade to rest the weary eyes upon. But in those desolate regions, the sun, that elsewhere is a blessing, is a curse and a blight from which it is impossible to escape. Many a weary gold-seeker had left his bones bleaching in those inhospitable mountains after vainly searching for what he would gladly have given his hard earned gold to find, a muddy pool of lukewarm water to slake for a little while his dying thirst.

So we sped along, wearily longing for sunset and the Colorado River, where we might at least cool our languid eyes with the gleam of water. About 4 p.m. (the hottest time of the day in those regions) we passed a lineman's shanty, built of railway sleepers. The thing stood on a little heap of sand, which had been formed purposely to give him a view of the coming and departing train. In that featureless desert the hut attracted our attention at once, and I watched it closely as we approached. By the hut stood—what I at first thought was a post, so immovable he was—a man.

I am not much of a believer in spiritual intuitions and occult communications, and all the rest of it; but something in the silent lonely figure touched a responsive cord in my being,

and I felt a rush of sympathy go out to my fellow man doomed to exist amid such dismal surroundings. I had some knowledge of the lineman's dreary life in these parts from a weird tale I once heard told at a camp fire by one of the men who witnessed the tragedy.

The lineman can rarely stand the strain of the loneliness more than a year. If they continue longer in the desert they show the effects of the trial ever after, and many become downright insane. The Australian shepherd suffers in a somewhat similar way, but much less acutely. He has the great advantage of the company of his flock, and his surroundings are infinitely more interesting. True the shepherd sees less of anything human than the lineman, for the latter may catch a glimpse of faces twice a day as the rushing trains flash past. But as my friend of the camp fire explained, these glimpses of human faces, after a while, only heighten the horrible solitude, as the lineman in these very lonely parts invariably gets it into his mind that people could speak to him if they wished, but that he is utterly forgotten and even unseen, and can never again associate with his fellow men.

As the train swept past the lonely motion-

less figure that hot July afternoon, all the weird yarns I had ever heard of the lineman's life, and death for that matter, came flashing across my mind. I felt a sharp pang of pain and sympathy go out of my heart to my fellow creature; for I have gone through some rather hard times of loneliness myself, and I know a little of how it feels. And for lack of anything else I could do at the moment to relieve my feelings, I seized a lot of papers and magazines, which I had been languidly looking over, and threw them out of the window with a wave of my hand to the man whose lines had certainly not fallen in pleasant places. Our eyes met for a moment, and I think the poor fellow read in my face the sympathy I felt for him.

The train was past in a flash, and presently in the interest of approaching the Colorado, and afterwards in the exciting dash for supper, I quite forgot my friend of the desert; but that night I thought of him again and again, and in the uneasy sleep of the train I had a miserable dream in which I saw him lying stark and dead, staring with unclosed, unblinking eyes straight up at the fierce, unmerciful sun.

* * * * *

Six years after that hot journey I was visit-

ing the cheerful and pretty little town of Santa Barbara, in California. I had been moving about enjoying the beautiful views, the fine sweeping coast line, and the curious sulphur baths on the mountain side.

One lovely morning I had taken a long walk south of the town, everywhere passing pretty cottages, and thrifty-looking farms. At last, somewhat tired and thirsty, I entered at a smart little gateway which led through a sweet old-fashioned garden, fragrant with the well-remembered flowers that people loved when I was young, but which one hardly ever sees nowadays, more 's the pity. Presently I came upon a charming scene. A young, rosy-cheeked woman was gathering peaches, while a beautiful child of five summers or so — there are no winters to reckon by in that charmed land— was proudly helping to fill a basket with the lovely fruit. I was naturally a little disconcerted when I suddenly came upon the idyllic picture, and, my shyness getting the better of my manners, I was on the point of beating a hasty retreat, when the young woman put everything to rights by advancing, and in the kindest and simplest way asking if there was anything she could do for me. There are many things and

customs in the United States which I must say I do not like, but there is one characteristic of the people which is really charming, and that is the easy, simple way they have of putting a stranger at his ease. I was relieved of all embarrassment in a moment, and it seemed as if I had met this friendly, handsome young woman a score of times, so perfectly at home did she make me Was I tired? Was I hungry? Was I thirsty? Of course she had deliciously cool spring water! but I must wait a moment until she squeezed a lemon into the glass as it made the water so much more refreshing and wholesome in this warm weather. And a slice of bread and butter is the very best thing for one after a long morning walk!

So this delightful young woman kept rattling on in the most easy, natural way, while with deft, quick hands she placed the refreshments on a table under a great grape vine which covered and shaded the front of the cottage, extending on trellis work twenty or thirty feet into the garden. Then when it was ready (and it did not take five minutes to complete the kindly and pretty arrangement), she sat down to entertain me with any information I might wish to hear on local news, history or politics

of the United States. Even her own family history was rehearsed from the landing on Plymouth Rock, that bleak December morning in the year of our Lord 1620, down to the last handsome bargain her husband had made in swapping a horse, which was beginning to show signs of age, for a Jersey cow and calf, and two dozen chickens, and a pet lamb for Violet—her little girl. Her brow clouded a little as she enumerated the last article. "You see," she continued, "I would rather have had another dozen chickens than the lamb, for a lamb is always mussing around and eating things, and giving nothing for its keep, whereas chickens in this climate lay nine months of the year, and eggs sell like hot cakes all through the winter in Santa Barbara, when the town is full of *one-lungers* (classical name of consumptives in Southern California)." So my hostess rattled on, while the child (just as free from self-consciousness as the mother) heaped fruit upon the table, and otherwise busied herself for my general comfort, occasionally sharing my lemonade and bread and butter, only, I feel certain, to put me more at my ease.

It was a charming scene, and one calculated to make a lonely wanderer like myself envious.

At last I could linger no longer and rose to take leave of Mrs. Busby. (She had told me her name in the first five minutes of our acquaintance and had asked mine simply as a matter of course.) Just then a man entered the barnyard with a team of horses, and Mrs. Busby, protesting that I could not go without seeing her husband, darted towards the yard, calling "Jacob! Jacob, come here at once! I want to introduce you to a gentleman who has seen Cape Cod and dear old Buzzard! and has been all over the world, and has told me everything, and oh, it is all so beautiful! and really, Jacob, you and I must go and see it all whenever you make that fortune out of the pigs, you know. But in the meantime come here at once, Jacob, and be introduced to a gentleman who has made me quite happy hearing it all." Then, after a moment's pause, "Hurry up, Jacob! do hurry up!"

"You see," she said, turning to me with a comical little smile, and a half worried look on her pleasant face, "you see poor Jacob had two dreadful years out in that awful desert, and has never been quite the same since. Not but what he is quite happy, for he has told me so scores of times, and whatever Jacob says you may bet your life is true every time."

In a minute or two Jacob came along. A grave, thoughtful man of forty or so, with that peculiar expression in the eyes and mournful lines about the mouth, which tell as plainly as a printed page of some past tragedy that has left its indelible traces upon the heart. He greeted me as pleasantly and kindly as his wife had done, if a little more reservedly, and asked me (with that sincere manner which, alas, is very rare on this planet) to drop in and rest any time I might be passing his place in my rambles about the neighbourhood. So, with kindly adieus, and with a pleasant, refreshed feeling in my soul and body, I took my leave of the new friends I had found in this strange land where, until that morning, I had not known a soul I could confide in except the coloured boy who polished my boots at a stand near the hotel.

On the following Sunday morning, after attending service at the old Mission Chapel, and sadly thinking of the dead past when the stout, fearless Fathers were a power in the land from Alaska to the Isthmus; managing the wild tribes of Indians with a judicious combination of firmness and gentleness well suited to the savage man's nature; I started off on a walk to my new friends, Jacob Busby and his wife.

I found them preparing to sit down to their Sunday dinner, a rather important event in rural society, as it is the one repast of the week which is quite free from all haste or anxiety of other things which are pressing to be done. The animals on the farm have all been attended to before the Sunday coat was donned, and the only thing further to be done is milking the cow late in the evening, and giving such horses as are in the barn a bucket of water and a feed of hay. These light tasks can be done (except on the large dairy ranches) by simply taking off one's coat, and carefully folding back the cuffs of the Sunday shirt. In fact, after the unaccustomed repose of the day of rest, and the restraint of an hour and a half in church, it is a real pleasure and relief to have these little duties to perform.

I received a frank, simple welcome, and a cordial invitation to dinner, which I accepted with much goodwill, as my morning walk had given me a most robust appetite. We were five at table, Jacob and his wife, their little daughter Violet, and the sonsie hired girl who, in such households as that of my friends, practically forms one of the family circle.

The meal passed off rather silently, in spite

of my hostess's kindly attempt to make conversation general. Jacob was evidently a firm believer in the golden rule of silence; the hired girl was awed by the presence of one from an outside world she feared was a little uncanny, and which she had been told was enormously wicked; while Violet, although prattling away in the most charming manner, yet in her anxiety to give me the widest information possible upon all local subjects of interest, naturally fell into complicated entanglements from which it required the assistance of the hired girl to extricate her. This tended to dampen Violet's conversational powers, and a painful, embarrassed silence usually followed these whispered corrections.

When our ample pleasant meal was completed, and Mrs. Busby was in that placid condition of mind in which a woman always is after an entertainment for which she is responsible has passed off in a satisfactory manner, Jacob and I betook ourselves to the barn to look at the horses, and smoke the pipe of peace and good comradeship.

We sat down on the sweet-smelling bales of hay and carried on a desultory conversation, to the accompaniment of the horses munching

their midday snack. After a while our remarks became more and more disjointed, and we were falling into that happy state which is just on the borderland of sleep, when a casual remark of mine about the beauty and salubrity of the coast in comparison to the hot dry country in the interior, brought Jacob in a moment out of his half slumberous condition into a state of the most acute wakefulness. He looked at me with those strangely pathetic eyes of his—the kind of eyes which have so nearly looked into the unknown land of death, that they never again quite lose the expression of having seen things unexpressible in human speech. Jacob rose from his half reclining position, and sat bolt upright with a kind of shudder, as if he had seen something "no canny." Then he knocked the dottle out of his pipe into a half-bucket of water—no fear of Jacob setting fire to a barn, careful fellow that he was—and looking me straight in the face quite differently from his usual downcast way of carrying himself, as if he wished to avoid "catching your eye," as the saying goes, ejaculated, "Stranger, were you ever in the all-fired damnable desert?"

Jacob's half scared, altogether intense look and fierce exclamation aroused me from my

drowsy mood in a moment. My friend was by no means given to emphatic, not to say profane language, and I knew I must have unwittingly touched some very sore and tender spot in his usually quiet undemonstrative heart by my simple remark. He said no more, but continued to regard me with the same steadfast, inquiring gaze, so I said in a careless way, more to relieve the rather embarrassing situation than anything else, "Oh yes! I have been in many deserts in different parts of the world, and, as you say, I have found them as a rule rather 'all-fired,' especially about three o'clock in the afternoon. I have been in deserts in India, Africa, Australia, and in this country. The hottest bit I remember at present, and I really think the *dreariest*, taking it all round, was in your own Mojave."

"The Mojave!" said Jacob, quite slowly and in a reflective tone, as if he were recalling something he had dreamed or had been told in some long past time, and yet with strangely suppressed eagerness—"the Mojave! Friend, can you remember the year, and the month, and the day you were in that hellish desert? and, above all, can you recall at what hour you left Barstow?" Jacob asked these ques-

tions in such an agitated way, so different from his ordinary stolid manner, that I at once thought of what his wife had said at our first meeting regarding his two years' sojourn in the desert, and of the effect it had upon the poor fellow's mind. Some unpleasant things flashed through my head, and for want of anything else to do I fell back upon the smoker's great resource of filling another pipe of tobacco, while I endeavoured to collect my scattered senses as to what was best to be done in case my friend became really violent, for I began seriously to think that he was not quite safe.

"Let me see," said I, reflectively, "it must have been in the year 189–, for I have an entry in my notebook of having arrived in London late in the month of July of that year, so it must have been early in that month when I was in Mojave. Oh, now I have it!" I cried, as a long forgotten incident flashed across my mind, "it must have been the afternoon of the 6th of July, for I spent the 4th in San Francisco, amid the howling of men and boys, the banging and smoke of fire-crackers, the screeching of bands erroneously called music, and a general horror of pandemonium which impressed the famous day indelibly on my mind. On the evening of

that day I boarded the train at the Oakland Mole bound east, feeling really quite happy and thankful to find myself whole in life and limb after the experiences of the past twelve hours. All that night we toiled along through the hot San Joaquin, and next morning breakfasted at a side station, where we had a long delay for some occult reason or other which the train men, with their usual lofty taciturnity, refused to divulge. Then we were shipped like bales of goods on to the Santa Fé railway, and commenced our long weary ride across the continent. That was the 5th I know, and here I have an entry of having crossed the Colorado River on the evening of the 6th."

I paused to light my pipe, feeling a certain creepy nervous sensation all the time, as Jacob's gaze had never been diverted from my face for one moment while I was slowly recalling these long past events. I had just managed to light my "dudeen" with a not very steady hand, when he thoroughly scared me by slowly rising and grasping my hands with such a vice-like grip that I was utterly in his power, while with eyes like living coals of fire and trembling lips he hissed, rather than said, "By the Lord, I have found you at last!"

I was now quite convinced that the poor man was insane, and after one desperate ineffectual effort to extricate my hands from his powerful grasp, as a last resource I called loudly for Mrs. Busby. In a moment that competent young woman dashed into the yard, closely followed by Violet, and the hired girl in all the glory of Sunday gown and feather-plumed hat. Tableau! Jacob and I facing each other in deadly earnest, Mrs. Busby grasping her husband's shoulders and trying to shake him (which was about as effectual as if she had tried to shake one of the redwood trees in the Mariposa grove), while Violet and the girl looked on in abject terror. "Jacob! Jacob! What do you mean?" with another vain shake. "Is this a proper way to treat a gentleman who has given me so much pleasure? I'm ashamed of you, Jacob!" Then another shake, and with flashing, tearful eyes, and a sort of undefined fear in her voice, "Jacob, you fool! what—do—you—mean?"

Then Jacob delivered himself in a calm, low concentrated voice of supreme satisfaction, which left no doubt at all in my mind that he was dangerously mad. "I have found him at last, Mary! By the mercy of God, I have found him at last! I have found the man who saved me from

a miserable death, just six years, three months, and seventeen days agone! Oh Mary, my girl! kiss him! Give him the ranch! God bless him! You said when he talked to you the very first day he came to the ranch, that he made you happy! And no wonder, for all unbeknown to you came the knowledge somehow! somehow! that he was the man who saved me for you, and gave you this happy life instead of a broken heart and a lonely fate, way back yonder, and the nightmare of a disgraced lover's death which you could never recall without a shudder! Kiss him, Mary! kiss him hard, my darling, for my sake!"

Then a strange state of things ensued that made me think all hands were demented, and that somehow I was not quite right myself. Mrs. Busby rushed at me with a cry that was half weeping and half laughing, and not only "kissed me hard" as Jacob had advised, but hugged me into the bargain until I was quite breathless, and utterly dumbfounded.

Here was tableau number two: I helpless in Mrs. Busby's wild embrace, Jacob executing a wonderful fandango around us, and again Violet and the grinning hired girl as audience. When we had all become thoroughly exhausted, by a

sort of general consent we seated ourselves on the hay to recover our scattered senses, and I, for one, to endeavour to discover the meaning and cause of the strange, not to say startling scene in which I had taken a prominent, but most involuntary part.

We all sat silent for awhile to recover ourselves. After a full five minutes or more, Jacob was the first to break the silence. Staring me in the face, he said solemnly, as if he were beginning an awful confession, "Stranger! this has unfixed me up to the hub." Then—holding out his hand—"forgive me! I am not a luny, although I did behave like one, but the suddenness of the certainty that I had really found you after all those years knocked all the little common sense I have out of my stupid old head. I suspected you all along; I never forget the looks of a human critter I have once clapped eyes on, and I remembered your face all through those years; but I am a shy man and I could not bring myself to speak out until I was dead sure. And then my feelings knocked me out like a two-year old when you first throw a lasso over his head, and so I made a fool of myself, and what is worse, I fear I hurt your sense of decency by my outrageous conduct."

This was a long impromptu speech for Jacob, and he delivered it so calmly, and with such simple candour and earnestness, that I began to think there might be "method in his madness" after all. Then he got up, gave a little chuckle of supreme happiness and satisfaction, took up a bucket and proceeded to give the horses a drink. Mrs. Busby looked on with a smiling face, evidently following in her own heart every turn and thought in her husband's mind. When he had completed his task and the horses were smacking their lips in the peculiar way horses have of doing after a drink, Jacob flung down the bucket, and with another self-satisfied chuckle, and a kind of Indian war-whoop proceeded to give us another edition of the Spanish fandango. I saw Mrs. Busby's eyes sparkle as if she longed to jump up and show us how the dance should be done, but woman-like she was ready for the occasion, and instantly brought Jacob to his senses by sternly reminding him that it was Sunday, and that she was ashamed to see him, a strict Baptist, doing a heathenish dance before his own innocent child on the sacred day! Then she bade us all come to the house for tea, for, as she forcibly put it, "We had had enough of rampageous goings on

for one while, and we had better take something to settle our nerves, and not go on like howling Piute Indians before girls and babies any more."

With which sage and discreet advice we all adjourned to Mrs. Busby's neat little parlour, where we solemnly partook of the cup "which cheers but does not inebriate," and which the great lexicographer recommended as a consoler under all circumstances.

When we had "settled our nerves" and I for one felt considerably calmer, I saw that Jacob was going to make an explanation of his rather unusual conduct. He looked a little sheepishly at his wife, then with a deprecatory glance at me, as much as to say, "wait a bit until I explain myself and you won't think me either a cut-throat or a madman," he settled himself in his armchair (telling me to lie down on the sofa as he felt sure I needed rest after the "darned silly way he had fooled around in the barn"), and plunged into his explanation without further preface as follows:

"I must go a good way back and begin my story at the time Mary and I started keeping company, way back at old Cape Cod. You see, friend, I am a man of a very plain sort, and even

the little I know does not lie in the talking line. Now Mary could tell the yarn as smart as a lay preacher at a tea meeting, for I have told it to her many and many a winter night, sitting by the kitchen fire, both of us wondering over and over again if we would ever meet the man that saved me from hell!" (This he said calmly and as a mere matter of fact, just as if he had been speaking of some one who had pulled him out of a river where he was drowning). "But," he continued, "this is my sermon, and I must take the stump myself and spit it all out, or, by Jehoshaphat! I fear I shall have a fit and bust!"

I knew by one or two uneasy movements on Mrs. Busby's part, that she, wife-like, good soul, was on the point of putting in a word here and there during this preliminary canter of Jacob's Pegasus. But she wisely restrained herself, seeing how deeply her husband was moved, and allowed him to proceed entirely in his own fashion. He paused a few minutes, seemingly arranging things in his mind, and then proceeded.

"Mary and I were born in Provincetown. You know that is the very outermost town on old Cape Cod, where the raging storms of winter and the drifting sand of summer pre-

vent any kind of thing growing excepting children. If children do not get nipped in the bud, as you might say, in the first winter, then nothing will kill them after that, unless they happen to get drowned, or go up to Boston for a polishing at the high-falutin' schools, and take some of them darned new-fangled diseases that are never heard of in a decent small village until some doggoned doctor comes along to tell people about them.

" Mary's folks and mine were neighbours, and she and I played and quarrelled and cavorted over the sand-hills bare-headed and bare-footed, attended the village school, and did such chores as we were fitted for, until I was big enough to go to the Banks with father for the cod-fishing, and Mary went to Boston to live with an aunt who was in the dressmaking line, and who had taken a fancy to her, and said that she must not be allowed to run wild any longer on Cape Cod.

" Well, sir, I kept hard at work with the old man for ten years. In summer we went to the cod-fishing (unless we found something better to do with a cargo of fish down the coast or even as far as Cuba), and in winter we mended sails, or made new ones, and put the schooner and boats in good order. It was a

pretty hard life, as I look back upon it now. But I was brought up to it, and my father was brought up to it, and his father and grandfather before him, way back to the old Colonial days, so we never thought much about the life being hard or soft; we were too busy to think much one way or the other. I have noticed that the harder a man works the less he is given to thinking or talking, that is to say, if he has plenty to fill his stomach, and a warm bed to sleep in. It is your rich people and your idle loafers—rich or poor—who do the gabbling and blaspheming, and make all the rampageous trouble in the world. Of course, if an honest man is out of work, and has neither a meal to eat nor a bunk to sleep in, a devil gets into him and he will make trouble sooner or later, and don't you forget it! When a good man goes bad he makes things hum! whereas your loafer is all froth and wouldn't break a window if a policeman is within a mile.

"By the time I was twenty-five the old man had stowed away enough of the needful in the savings bank to keep him and mother comfortable for the rest of their lives. He offered me the whole outfit of schooner, boats, and nets to set up for myself, and so enable me

to marry—an event Mary and I had been looking forward to for many a long day. But the Lord fixed my life on a different plan altogether.

"It came about in this way, and you must not mind if I am rather long-winded in spinning my yarn, for I must tell it in my own fashion or you will never understand why I left the old home (which I loved as I shall never love a spot again in this world) and dusted for California. You see, sir," proceeded Jacob, in a soliloquizing mood, "it is a fixed notion of mine that we never love but one spot on this earth! We may love several people—father—mother—sisters—brothers—and even a friend once in a great while" (looking me hard in the face) "but the roof under which men and women have passed their childhood, be it hut or castle, is the one place which deserves the name of home. We may build as many pretty houses as we have a mind to; we may furnish them with all the pretty things women love to buy; we may dig and delve, plant and sow, until we make what people call an earthly paradise, but we can quit and forget it all in a week! But where we grew from infancy to manhood or womanhood is not a *house,* it is *Home!*

Every mantel and fireplace, every door and window, every old picture on the wall, worth ten thousand dollars or only worth ten cents, every table and old four-post bedstead, are so impressed on our memories that we can never forget them until we go to our last long sleep."

Jacob paused after this philosophical—not to say poetical—outbreak; carefully tore the margin from a newspaper, so as not to damage the printed matter; twisted the bit of paper into a wisp; lit it at the pretty little fire Mrs. Busby had lighted on the hearth, and proceeded to set his pipe a-going. Then he heaved a little half-sad, half-contented sigh, and gazed into the fire with that look which sees something that no one else can see, and proceeded to deliver himself still on the same subject. "Yes, siree, a man or a woman never has more than one *home*. My home was way back on Cape Cod and Mary's was there too. Here we have a beautiful and very comfortable *place*, for which we are very thankful to the Lord, but we can quit it to-morrow without a bit of pain if we can make a better bargain anywhere else.

"But far down in our hearts is the picture of an old queer place that is not a house to us—it is *home!* And often when we lie awake o'

nights and hear the boom of the long Pacific rollers thundering on the beach below us here, I know that deep in our hearts is the memory of a wind-swept, bleak, and stormy coast where stands for each an old ramshackle concern that a poor man would hardly thank you for letting him live in rent free, but to us is more beautiful than all the palaces that ever were built. This cottage and ranch will be to Violet what these old places on the Cape are to her mother and me. She will have to leave her home, that is in the destiny of us all, but this is the one spot she will call home away down in her heart, if she lives to be a hundred and roams all over the world, and owns the most beautiful house that ever was built!"

It was very impressive to hear this plain (and as a rule silent) man deliver himself thus. I saw Mrs. Busby surreptitiously apply the corner of her apron to her eyes, while Violet climbed on to her father's knee, and putting her arms round his neck, said solemnly, "Father! please don't say any foolish things about us leaving our home, for you know we will never do that." "No, no," said her father, kissing the child and patting her head, "we will never do that—never do that! In the meantime, let me get on

with my yarn," gently putting her down, "or I will never get through in time to give the poor horses their supper."

* * * * *

"We had made a splendid season on the Banks, and filled our little hooker as full of fine salted cod as she could hold. It was on the last day of September that we battened down the hatches and made all snug for the run home. The season had been very calm as a rule, but during the last few days we were on the Banks the weather had been getting more and more of a wintry snap in it, and the glass had been slowly—very slowly, which is a bad sign—going down. We squared away in the evening before a middling stiff nor'easter that gave our schooner enough to do to carry all sail. We started from the southerly end of the Banks, and hoped to make port in fifty hours or so, and as the hooker was a rare sea-boat we had no idea of heaving-to if the fair wind held on. We carried all sail that night, but by eight bells next morning the stiff breeze had grown to a fair-sized gale, and the schooner was burying herself in a splutter of foam, and sometimes shipping pretty heavy green seas which made it hard work to get about the decks. So we began

taking in sail, and a very ugly job it was. However, after a while we got the mainsail, staysail, and jib made all snug, and then we went a good deal easier. All that day we were scudding before the wind, which was now blowing great guns, with the glass still falling. Of course, fishing schooners don't depend much upon taking the sun, they mostly go by a slap-dash kind of dead reckoning; but even the best equipped ship in Uncle Sam's navy could have done nothing about taking sights in such a smother of sea and sky. So we depended altogether upon the compass and the log-line, with a pretty sound knowledge of the tides on the coast, to make a safe landfall.

"Father knew the road from the Banks to the Cape about as well as most fishermen. He had been in the trade, boy and man, for fifty years, and had never been shipwrecked, or even lost a man overboard, which was a rare record among fishermen on the Banks. But his turn was bound to come sooner or later, as all seafaring people know; and I even think that the old man had some sort of warning signal from the other world before we left home on our last cruise. I thought something like this at the time, for I noticed that he kissed mother just

before we cast off instead of waving his hand, with a 'So long, mother!' as was his usual custom. In fact, I never remember seeing him kiss mother before; and it struck me very forcibly at the time, and I have often thought of it since. You see a thing of that sort is more apt to catch the eye in the old-fashioned places, way back east, than anywhere else; for the folks there are not much given to kissing, and look upon it with much the same sort of contempt as we look upon a silly Johnny Frenchman taking off his hat and at the same time doubling himself up as if some one had hit him below the belt.

"The wind by compass was about east-nor'-east, and the schooner was racing along almost dead before it. Since we had taken everything in but a small bit of the foresail she was making much better weather, and would have got along well enough if the storm had broken and given us some chance to see ahead. But it never let up for an instant, and we could not see the bowsprit-end for the smother of storm wrack and flying scud. Then we had scudded too long, in hopes of making port, to think of heaving-to. If we had dared to bring the little craft broadside on to such a sea, even for a

moment, she would have been rolled over and over before a man could wink. So there was nothing for it but to keep her before the wind, giving the Cape, as we thought, a wide berth.

"As we got nearer to the coast the weather grew worse; and towards midnight it came on to snow so heavy that father and I had to stand by the binnacle to keep it clear of snow so that the men at the helm could see the compass. The two men steering were lashed to the wheel, of course, otherwise they might have been washed away any moment, when the schooner would have broached-to in a flash and foundered. It was about two bells (one o'clock, you know) on that awful night or morning that the end came; and strange to say it came in a fashion that I had never thought of, although I had heard of such things often enough, and even had had one or two pretty close calls on the Banks in foggy weather. My father had just put his mouth to my ear and shouted, 'Hold on, lad!' when the schooner struck what I knew in an instant was a great steamer fighting her way dead in the teeth of the gale. With the plunge that sent our craft to the bottom like an egg-shell, and buried the ship's nose in the sea up to the hawse-

holes, I was flung like a cork almost on to her foc'sle-head. But I had all my wits about me, and I froze pretty quick to the first thing I struck, which happened to be the fluke of the port anchor; and there the mate of the steamer found me when he hauled himself along the headrail with a lantern to see if he could make out, as he told me afterwards, 'what in the darned tarnation they had struck.'

"Fortunately our poor little hooker had only made a pretty big dent in one of the bow plates, showing that we must have struck the steamer a sort of slanting blow. If we had struck her fair stem on, at the rate both crafts were going, we should have knocked a hole in the heavily laden old tramp big enough to take her to the bottom along with the schooner. I only remember the flash of a light in my eyes, strong hands passing a rope's end under my arms, and then I did not move hand or foot for two days, they told me afterwards.

"I was the only one saved from the schooner, and a most wonderful escape it was, such as seldom happens to one seafaring man out of a hundred thousand. The steamer was the 'North Star' of Boston, bound to Jamaica, and by the time I was able to tell my story in an under-

standable way, we were almost half way to the West Indies. I was very kindly treated by all hands; and the skipper advised me to go on regular duty, as he was short handed, saying that he knew by experience that work was the best medicine for sorrow; besides if I joined the ship I would have a nice little pile coming to me at the end of the trip, which, as he sagely observed, 'was always soothing to any man's feelings.'

"Well, to make a long story short, we reached Kingston in due course. We filled the steamer with coffee, rum, and fruit, and made the run back to Boston without mishap. The captain behaved like a gentleman (as he was), gave me a go-ashore rig-out from his own chest (we were both of a size), and every dollar of my wages, reckoning from the dismal night that I boarded his ship without his invitation. The good old man also told me that if I came back within a week he would give me a second mate's billet; with a promise that if I liked the trade and stuck with him, he would give me command of the ship in a year, as he was now comfortably off and tired of the sea.

"This, to a poor shipwrecked sailor, was a darned tempting offer; and if it had been made

to me two months before I would have jumped at it, you bet! But my love for the sea was gone; I hated the very smell of salt water, and I wanted to get away from it altogether and everything connected with it. I have got over that feeling now and I can enjoy the sight and sound of the ocean without thinking it a savage monster always seeking to swallow up poor men and ships.

"When I got back to the Cape I was like a man returned from the dead. Some time after the storm (which was the heaviest known on the New England coast for many years) a piece of the stern-board of the schooner was picked up with her name, 'Patience of Provincetown.' Then, of course, our fate was known, for every man, woman, and child on the Cape knew the often told story of the sea on our wild open coast. Mother took to her bed, and within three weeks had gone after father. Mary had gone to Boston to stay with her aunt, and there I went to see her, as she was about the only one left to me, and of course I wasn't quite sure if she was left to me or not. You see I was quite jiggered with all the trouble, and I thought that perhaps Mary had got over her grief in the gay society of the city, and may-be

had froze on to some darned scalawag of a counter-jumper who had cottoned to her."

Here Mrs. Busby (who had never moved while Jacob plodded through his story except occasionally to put a fresh bit of wood on the fire) seized him by his ample locks, and while she gave him some vigorous shakes, exclaimed, "Jacob! how dare you talk in that outrageous manner when you are telling our sad history, and when I never heard you talk so long, and, I must say, so well in all my life! Now don't say any more foolish and stupid things, but just get on with *facts*." "Well, well!" said Jacob, taking no more notice of the shaking than if it had been some other body's head which was being manipulated, "I'll get on fast enough if you will just have a little patience, my dear; but you know as well as I, that no mortal man can tell exactly what a girl will do, and the day I started from Cape Cod for Boston to find you, was the meanest day I had ever worried through up to that date. I suppose my late griefs and misfortunes had knocked all the sand out of me, for I felt in such a low-down sort of state that there wasn't grit left in me worth a cent."

Here Jacob smoothed his rumpled hair, and looked pensively in the fire for a minute or so.

"Well, sir, I found Mary right enough, and I must say that helped me a heap. But my future way of life was all dark before me, and I had no more notion what to do than a five-year-old kid. One day Mary and I were strolling down by the docks (you see the ships attracted me, although I hated the salt water for the ill it had done me) when a printed notice caught my eye, 'Strong active young men wanted by the Santa Fé Railroad Company. Good wages and permanent employment to suitable men. None but those with first-rate references need apply.' That notice set my mind working again, and I was in such a hurry to get to the office that I went to the extravagance of spending two nickels for Mary and myself, although I was as near dead broke as ever I was before or since. I saw the agent, and he seemed to think I would suit if I got the references. The terms were three dollars a day and grub, with free fare to the place of employment, which was indicated in a general way as at the Needles, California.

"I soon had the references, and within three days I was tearing along westward after a hard parting with Mary, and a promise that she should come as soon as I had a shanty fit to hold her.

"I remember that it seemed a long weary ride on the cars. It took us five days to reach our journey's end, and I was mortal tired and sick of it all before it was done; but on the fifth night out, after running through some country that would be called Pine-Barrans in the South, we crossed a straggling sort of river which the train men told me was the Colorado, and in a few minutes pulled up in the town of Needles. I remember thinking that it was a funny name, and that night I discovered that it was a funny town. It was Christmas Eve when we arrived, and the town's-people were celebrating the festival in the peculiar way known in the West as painting the town red. This consists in every man, white, black, and coloured, getting more or less under the influence of whisky, and having what they call 'a high old time.'

"I found my way to the office of the Santa Fé, and reported myself ready for work. 'Work!' said a fair-haired, handsome man, whom I found to be the representative of the company, and who was sitting by a stove in the office with a party of friends smoking and drinking—'work! nary a stroke of work will be done in this free and enlightened town for three days, except it may

be to give friends proper Christian burial if they meet with accidents, you know, at this joyous and sacred season. But pray don't let the thought of that disturb your simple eastern mind, for the work is by no means severe, as we always utilize the sand-bars down by the river at this happy and "good-will-to-man" period. You see the sand is so soft that an able bodied man can scoop out a grave in ten minutes if he is only sober enough to stand up. Until two years ago,' he continued quite seriously, while his friends remained as solemn as judges, 'until two years ago, our capable, but penurious Town Council, always provided at least twelve graves ready dug in the cemetery for our Christmas festivities. But after Mr. Wakeup became a member he used his influence to do away with the good old custom, saying we were behind the times, and a lot of nonsense of that sort, and that we must be active and capable enough to deal with emergencies as they arise. The fact is, I understand, that Mr. Wakeup was in the Unitarian Ministry line of business before he took the *Coyote Saloon*; and of course he cannot be expected to have the same tender feelings about this happy season which the rest of us naturally have.'

"There was a chorus of 'That's so' and 'Darned well put, Professor!' from the assembled citizens, while the 'Professor' as they called him, arose and solemnly introduced himself to me as 'Theodore Cecil Lexington, Professor of Biology, University of New England, Massachusetts, United States of America.' Then he requested all hands to fill their glasses to the brim, and drink to the health and better acquaintanceship of 'my friend' (here the Professor referred to the letter of credentials which I had handed to him)—'of my friend, Mr. Jacob Busby, a name, gentlemen, which reminds us pleasantly, but not too obtrusively, of being *busy!* You simply leave out one b and you have the word. Or you take my dear friend's name from another standpoint, and in full. *Busby!* a large shaggy cap worn by the Royal Artillery which, as you all know, gentlemen, is a brave and gallant regiment belonging to that great and glorious nation from which we are all descended.' Here the Professor had evidently intended to wind up his speech, but hearing several murmurs of disapproval, he very neatly added, 'and which we had the pleasure and honour of most thoroughly licking at Bunker Hill and on many other notable battlefields.'

This brought down the house, and he resumed his seat amid a storm of applause and good fellowship.

"It was the first time in my life that a real scholarly gentleman had ever spoken to me familiarly and on even keel as it were. And although I knew that he was kind of making fun of me, yet it sounded mighty pleasant, and somehow his soft voice, and properly balanced lingo, put me in mind of the dear old schooner as she would slide along over the long lazy swells on a fine moonlit night, with just enough of wind to fill her sails, and with a kind of murmuring sound as if the little craft and the sea were making love to each other."

As Jacob wound up this pretty, and rather poetical sentence, Mrs. Busby stared at him with a dazed look as if she feared he was going mad, or was going to die. "Jacob! whatever has come over you? where did you learn poetry? You never said such things to me, and I am sure I tried hard enough to make you, for a girl always wants poetry when she is in love! What on earth is the meaning of it all, Jacob?"

"Never you mind, Mary, the thing is there all the same even if I can't always say it. I remember how I used to cry and shiver in old

Deacon Slowcome's Sunday school class, over that awful hymn :

> "There is a dreadful hell,
> With everlasting flames,
> Where sinners must for ever dwell
> In darkness, fire, and chains."

Jacob said this with a queer half smile, and after pausing a little as if to gather up the threads of his narrative, he quietly proceeded. "The Professor very kindly told me where I could get supper, and as every hotel and lodging-house in the town was chokefull of people who had come to have high jinks on Christmas, he told me to come back after supper, and he would give me a corner of his bedroom to make a shake-down with my blankets for the night.

"The Professor told me afterwards how he had come to be 'side-tracked' as he called it, in this far-off western wilderness. There was a woman in the story (I never heard a story yet without a woman in it), and there was a dead man, and a lot of trouble. Then there was the help of friends who loved him for the memory of the days before he went wild, and a mother who spent all her fortune on lawyers and courts, and all that sort of *skullduggery*, and died of a broken heart at last. Anyhow, my friend got

clear after awhile, and made tracks for the West. Of course it was an end of the Professor business, and all that highfalutin', but being a smart man he soon picked up a job out this way, where, what a man can *do*, is of very much more importance than what he has *done* in the past.

"I went to have supper as my friend advised, and was very glad to get through and start back to his room, as all over the town groups of men were playing high jinks. I knew that if they got a hold of me I would have a rough time of it, for nothing pleases those sort of fellows so much as getting a tender-foot (as they call a new-comer) to make fun of. The fun consists of such tricks as two of the crowd taking you by the arms, and then counting thus 'One—two—three—jump!' jerking you a foot or so from the ground, while the leader of the band puts a bullet from his revolver exactly on the spot where you jump from. The faster this is done, and the more accurately, the greater the intense enjoyment of the spectators. These sort of amusements went on for a week and then things quieted down. Small parties of men, more or less used-up and seedy-looking, could be seen leaving town at all hours of the day and night; and in a week from the night I arrived

the Needles was once more the quiet place it usually is, with its one bit of excitement, the incoming and outgoing trains.

"Mr. Lexington (or rather the Professor as everybody called him) settled down to business the day after New Year, and told me that he wished me to take charge of a portion of the railroad in the desert. My duty would be to keep a certain length of the line in order, doing anything that one man could do alone, and getting extra help when necessary. 'The occupation is not one of brilliant hilarity,' said the Professor, 'but there is great opportunity for inward reflection, and studying the poetical and the aesthetic properties of the human mind. You will also have the consolation of drawing excellent wages, viz., five dollars per diem.'

"Next day the train took me to my station and dumped me down with my little belongings and a fortnight's grub. The foreman of the working gang came along and showed me my boundary, and instructed me in my duties, which were, to see that the line was clear, and to report any damage that might occur by washouts or otherwise.

"My shanty was made of half-rotten railroad ties covered with a canvas roof. I had no com-

panionship whatever, excepting that of a poor old miserable-looking black cat, which the foreman told me belonged to the last lineman, who was found dead on the rail the day before Christmas, and was buried a little way back of the shanty.

"I asked him how the accident happened, to which he replied, as he busied himself filling his pipe, 'I guess it wasn't any accident at all. Hello! here's the train,' he cried, as he waved the signal-flag. 'Good-bye, Mr. Busby, good-bye! Don't mope, keep your mind lively with Sankey's hymns, or coon songs, or even swearing at the cat, or the Mojave lizards which always fill up the shanty on the hot afternoons —but don't mope!' With that parting advice he leaped on the train, and with a final 'So long!' was gone.

"I had nothing further to do but to cook my supper and arrange my things in the shanty. The season had been what they call a dry one, and that means in the desert very cold in winter and very hot in summer. I remember that first night in my new quarters very well, and I think it was about the coldest spell I ever felt. The thermometer falls very much lower in the east and nobody talks of zero or that sort of thing as being

out of the way. But this I know that the cold about Cape Cod doesn't eat into a man's vitals in the way it does in the desert. I suppose the air is so clear that there is nothing to break the cold like the bits of fog and cloud and spray that happen near the sea. And then the stars! Why, in the desert they seem so near that a strong man might throw a stone on to them!

"On the nights when I couldn't sleep (and they were pretty frequent when I first began to live out there), I used to roll myself in my blankets and sit propped up against my shanty and watch the stars. I would try to count them, but that was hard work and usually sent me to sleep, when I would waken up at daylight with a stiff neck and as cold as ice. But what interested me most was just to look at the big stars (and they are all big out there) and to think of them as places where men and women and children live. I tell you there was a sort of comfort in the idea that there were people looking at me from those stars, when I knew only too well that there wasn't a soul near me in that cursed desert.

"So the days and weeks and months went past—one day so like another that unless I had kept a little record in a notebook, I would

have thought I had been there ten years when I had only been there ten weeks. Of course I wrote letters to Mary and she wrote letters to me. But, oh! how I longed to hear her speak, the great God only knows!

"When I had been on the line one year I concluded to go into the Needles and have a settlement with the Company, and put my money into some sort of investment, where it would make a little by interest. I had a tidy sum to draw—nearly fifteen hundred dollars—as I had a little money with me when I arrived from the East, and I had saved every cent I could, so that I might be able in two years or so to have enough money to buy a bit of land on the coast somewhere and send for Mary. This was the one hope which kept me alive during the first year; what kept me alive during the second I will tell you presently. All through that first year it would have made a Quaker laugh in Meeting, to see the way I totted up my account every night of my life just to find how my balance stood. I knew it all off by heart to the last cent, but it was the one pleasure of my life to see in figures just how my account stood, and to reckon the exact day when it would touch the three thousand

dollar notch; for that was the sum I had fixed upon as the amount necessary to buy the bit of land, when I could send for Mary, and be done with the cursed desert for ever. Oh, how I hated it all! I have never been what the books call 'a society man,' and even as a boy I never cared much to talk myself or to hear others talk. But in the desert I would have given some of my hard-earned gold to hear the darnest old scalawag jaw upon any subject he didn't understand worth a cent (and these are always the subjects that scalawags jaw about), just for the sake of hearing a human voice.

"When the boss of the line used to come out once in a great while, and go fussing around, and swearing like a pirate—as such men are apt to do—I would follow him about like a dog, and drink in every one of his words as if they were the sweetest music ever made by the blessed angels.

"I got leave from the boss, who sent a man out to take my place for a week, and went into the Needles the day before Christmas, just one year to a day after I first struck that town. I found the Professor exactly the same as the year before. The office and surroundings were un-

changed, only perhaps a little more ramshackle and out of order, if that were possible. My friend greeted me with the same kind manner as at our first meeting, and with the same beautiful way of running off his words that was delicious to my unaccustomed ears; it somehow brought back the memory of all sweet sounds I had ever heard, such as the singing of birds in spring-time, the lapping of the sea on a calm summer day, the ringing of church bells on a still Sabbath morning when the sound seems to come floating towards you, rising and falling on the air as if it were some wonderful thing you could touch with your hands.

"'Well,' said the Professor, in his soft, sweet, clear tones, 'well, Jacob, my dear friend! welcome once more to the splendid metropolis of the West, and to my humble yet honourable mansion, part and parcel of the aforesaid great city. I perceive some thoughtful lines upon your massive brow, indicative of much sweet self-communion at the fountain head of all poetry, which is Nature undisturbed by the frivolous and distracting presence of our too often vulgar fellow human-kind. Now, Mr. Busby,' continued the Professor with a graceful

sweep of his hand, 'make yourself at home, and freely use (as if in your own beautiful and healthful country residence) all the conveniences, not to mention elegancies, of my town house. I regret the absence of feminine personality, which I daresay you perceive in the slightly incongruous arrangement of furniture and knick-knacks. But, my dear Jacob, there is a certain recompense even in the absence of that sweet presence, in the fact that you can lay anything out of your hand (such as combs, brushes, razors, soap, towels, boots, etc., etc.) with the certainty of finding them again; whereas, to put it mildly and with all due respect, under feminine government it is very different, as most of us are aware.'

"'The incongruous arrangement of furniture and knick-knacks,' as the Professor put it, was a lot of empty whisky and wine cases scattered about the room as seats, and a strong rough settee in one corner which served as a bed on occasion, and on which I slept the first night of my arrival at the Needles just a year before.

"The Professor had a little bedroom at the back of the office, and this, with the sitting room, constituted the whole of what he called his town house. I explained my business, and

my hopes and wishes for the future to Mr. Lexington. He listened with the most kindly interest, said a few pleasant words regarding my prospects, and proceeded to put my account into shape. Of course I knew exactly what I had; but in less time than I could have put the figures on a slate, he had the whole thing fixed on fine red-lined paper, and my balance shown in beautiful large figures as clear as print, and correct to a nickel. Then he handed me a receipt to sign, and began writing an order for the money. But before he had done more than write 'pay to the order of Jacob,' he paused and said, 'Busby, my friend, you wish to make all the money you can this incoming year, with a view of forsaking the calm, not to say secluded life you have been enjoying during the last year, and embarking upon the very hazardous ocean of matrimony.

"'Now, my dear Jacob, I have been in this mundane sphere at least ten years of "time's ceaseless course" longer than you have. And consequently I assume that my experience with the fair and charming, but, alas! volatile sex, has been considerably more extensive than yours. This urges me, on account of the deep interest I have taken in your welfare ever since

the happy night when our friendship so auspiciously began, to warn you of the extremely risky course you are pursuing. But with this most laudable desire to warn you, also comes the sad knowledge (learned, of course, by my aforesaid longer experience of life than yours) that the warning will be utterly wasted upon a young man in your state of infatuation. Therefore, upon the often foolish principle of making the best of a bad job, I congratulate you with all my heart, and may all your foolish dreams be fulfilled.'

"All the while the Professor was saying this, his lips were smiling and his eyes twinkling with a merry, simple expression, like what we sometimes see on a child's face when the youngster is trying to make us laugh at some funny little story he has invented on the spur of the moment. Then he swung his office chair round to his desk, took a blank book with printed forms of receipts, and filled out a form for me to sign; having completed this he took another book to give me a cheque for my money payable in Los Angeles. The Professor had advised me to draw my money at that town instead of at the Needles, as I could there place it in the savings bank and get a nice bit of interest

every six months. Presently he turned to me with a laugh, saying, 'Jacob! enough of business for one day; let us shake off dull care, as the song says so wisely, and proceed to the banqueting-hall, and regale the inner man with the feast of reason and the flow of soul.'

"He wrote out a cheque for the money, at the same time advising me to leave it in his safe until I went to Los Angeles the day after Christmas. Having settled our business, the Professor slipped his arm through mine and we started off to have our supper. There are a good many eating and drinking places in all frontier towns, and the Needles has its full share. My friend seemed to know all about them and made running comments upon each as we passed along. At last we came to the same restaurant where I had eaten my first meal in the Needles just one year before. The Professor entered, and taking possession of a small table in a corner of the room, invited me, 'To take a seat and make yourself at home regardless of the splendour of the surroundings.' The splendour consisted of a bare room with a bar on one side, and a cooking-place on the other, and a lot of rather rickety tables with very much soiled table-cloths. There were two negro

waiters, one of whom proceeded to give the dirty cloth a sort of sweep with a still dirtier towel, and then slapped down a large glass of water to each of us with that air of superiority which only a negro can assume.

"After studying the bill of fare a long time, without paying the slightest attention to the waiter's evident impatience, the Professor handed the bill to me, remarking, 'Mr. Busby, would you please study this wonderful and artistic menu. Allow me also to suggest that by no means you decide hastily. In the meantime I shall hold a little pleasant converse with Mr. Samuel George Washington. Mr. Washington, permit me to address you by your illustrious cognomen only—your mellifluous baptismal names being for the moment understood but silent—Mr. Washington! allow me to introduce to your distinguished notice my valued friend, Mr. Busby, whilom of Cape Cod, and now of the Santa Fé Railroad Company. We have come, Mr. Washington, to your venerable hospice, for the refreshment of the inner man, and at the same time for the quickening and elevating of the aesthetic part of our nature, by the simple process of gentle friction with your stupendous intellect.'

"While the Professor was saying this with his soft voice and beautiful manner, the big impudent nigger underwent a complete change. I cannot tell whether he thought it was flattery, or a proper respect paid to his great mind; whether he thought it was sarcasm which he dreaded some one else would hear and smile at, or whether, with the tremendous vanity of his race, he took the Professor's words as the simple truth—anyway, he became a changed nigger, and took our order with the most profound care and respect. Everything went off finely. I ate the best meal I had tasted since I had seen California, and under the most happy circumstances. With the cheering wit of the Professor (which I know now he assumed to take my thoughts off the dismal desert life that lay on me like a nightmare) I almost forgot the silence and killing monotony to which I would return in a few days, and felt a little of the old interest in life which the past year had almost taken out of me. The fact was my future was really bright if I had been able to look at it as another would have seen it. But even the Professor's brilliant talk failed to dispel for a moment the gloom that weighed upon my soul like the shadow of death.

"'Come now! Jacob!' he cried; 'why so sad when all the rosy future lies before? If it were I who wore the clouded brow there might be some reason for doleful sighs and sad expression. My life, tragedy and comedy, is in the archives of the irrevocable past, yours in the plastic and beautiful coming years. Therefore, my friend, take time and destiny by the forelock, and mould the future into beauty and usefulness. Give no encouragement to the malignant demons who are always watching for a weak moment to pounce upon us and tear our life to pieces, as buzzards watch a tired or wounded deer. Courage, comrade, while there is yet time! while there—is—yet—time!' he repeated slowly in a sad low voice, quite different from his usual clear, sweet tones.

"Just then, angry voices, the crash of a falling table with glasses, bottles, pipes, and packs of cards, the springing of men to their feet with hands at their hip pockets, warned us that there was about to be the not unfrequent ending to a western gambling bout. In a moment the Professor sprang among the wild, half-drunken men, gently sweeping his long delicate white hands over the pistols and knives that were ready for their deadly work. 'Gentlemen! gen-

tlemen!' he cried; 'I implore you not to mar the peace and good-fellowship of this festive occasion, by any exuberance of high spirits partly due to the present happy season, and partly attributable to the influence of the flowing bowl. Gentlemen! put up your pretty playthings in the name of the mothers that once nursed you at their white breasts, and who are now lying in silent graves, or are toiling along the weary road of life thinking of you at this very moment. Gentlemen! I implore——' Then a shot rang out, and my friend threw up his hands as he staggered back into my arms with his heart's blood staining his handsome mouth and trickling down on his shirt-front. A dozen willing hands carried the dying man to the settee, and I put my coat under his head for a pillow. He did not speak or seem to feel pain, and lying quite still and holding my hand, he died with a peaceful smile on his face, as if he had found at last what he had always been looking for.

"When I realized that my friend was dead—the only man who had treated me kindly in that dreary miserable land—I felt as if I were going mad, and with a curse on them all, I demanded who was the murderer of my friend! An old

man laid his hand on my shoulder with a kindly touch. 'My young friend,' said he, 'don't speak hastily, and above all, don't use the word *murderer* among gentlemen. It is not good *form*, and what is more, it is not judicious. Our late lamented friend would never have used such a coarse word. So, my dear young man, allow me to advise you to "dry up" as we say in the West. You know that more than a dozen guns were drawn at once, but not one was drawn with any unpleasant feeling to the learned Professor. Still, unfortunately, through the kindness of his heart, and doubtless with the most benevolent motives, he thoughtlessly interfered with gentlemen settling a trifling dispute according to the simple, and I may add satisfactory method of the country; and so he met with an accident which I feel certain we all deeply deplore, but which was most probable to happen with a dozen nervous hands on as many hair-triggers. We will each and all attend to the obsequies of our late friend, as men of honour ought to do for the sake of the memory of an honourable man, which is all that is necessary, and all that even the most exacting man of honour could expect under the sad circumstances. With this, my dear young friend, you

will no doubt see the propriety of cheerfully acquiescing.'

"There was a general chorus of approval from the crowd of fierce-looking, half and even wholly drunken men. 'Bravo Judge! you're the boy with the elegant tongue, bedad! you ought to be in Congress, me boy! and not wasting your sweetness on the desert air, as the saying goes.'

"'Shut up, Paddy! and don't be making an all-fired coyote-ass of yourself, at a darned unlucky time like this, when we're all kind o' unfixed in our in'ards by this blasted mistake that some double jackass-rabbit-fool among us has made to-night. If our end of the bar-room hadn't been so pesky full o' tobacco smoke, and we hadn't been so all-fired drunk, we might have spotted the galoot that went swinging his gun around in such a darned careless fashion; and if we had I for one would have voted for a lariat and the nearest telegraph post. But, mates, the thing is done, and the verdict of the jury is "accidental"?' A response of 'Thet's so,' came from the crowd. 'Well then, we have only to thank the judge handsomely for his beautiful oration to this young man who is really to be excused for getting mad at the fool

(whoever he was) who onhitched his trigger like a Piute in a war dance.

"'Now then, boys, all that is past, and what we have to do is hurry up about giving the Professor here a good send off. Mr. Burrows will do the job properly with his shiny new hearse, if he sees the needful put up beforehand. So all you have to do is to put your hands in your pockets and dig up the yellow metal, for I guess, mateys, that I will take no silver for this racket.' In a few minutes the man's hat was so heavy that he had to use both hands, and presently a committee of three of the soberest of the crowd counted the money, and announced that the collection amounted to five hundred and seventy dollars, which seemed to be satisfactory to everybody.

"I need not weary you any more with this part of my long-winded yarn. My poor friend was buried next day. Every digger and idle person in the town—and that seemed to include the whole population—turned out to pay their respects to the dead, for he had been a general favourite with men, women, and children. It seemed strange to me, coming as I did from an old-fashioned place, that there was not the slightest effort made to fix the guilt of the brutal crime upon any one.

"The day after the funeral things dropped into the old way with such commonplace regularity that it was hard for me to realize that I had witnessed what I called an unprovoked cruel murder, but which the inhabitants called 'a durned onlucky accident.'

"The cheque for my pay being locked up in the Professor's safe, nothing could be done about it until his successor came from the East. It is a feature of Western civilization that the law looks after any matter connected with money with the most scrupulous care; 'accidents' to the person are usually considered quite venial affairs.

"With a very sad and heavy heart I went back to my dreary job in the desert. The months passed along as they always do whether we are happy or miserable. The yucca burst into its delicate bloom and slowly faded, leaving the ghostly plant more ghostly and ugly still with the bleached-out flower stalks hanging from the ends of the grotesquely crooked branches which always gave me the idea of something in pain.

"So the time passed for six months. I had not got my money for the past year, and when I asked the boss, who visited me once in a

great while, about the cheque, he shook his head, and 'guessed' he would rather say nothing on the subject. All these six months I had not had the scrape of a pen from Mary. Of course I concluded that she had given me the slip, and the feeling grew strong upon me that I was forgotten all round. The 'desert sickness' which attacks all men sooner or later under such circumstances, took firmer hold of me month after month. Like all the rest who had gone before me, I lost the power of thinking aright. I quite forgot to consider that I had not written to Mary for nearly a year. She had kept on hoping month after month for an answer to her letters, and when none came she concluded that I had gone crooked, as half the men who go West do, and had given me up, poor little woman!"

Here Mrs. Busby arose and gave her husband a resounding slap. "And you deserved to be given up, you dear old stupid Jacob that you are!" She laughed, and turned to arrange something in the room, but not before I had detected tears in her eyes, and a look on her face which showed how near she was to a burst of weeping, as the memory of that time came vividly back. Jacob took no notice of his wife's interruption and proceeded slowly, as if he were

thinking aloud rather than speaking to others: "That's how the mind of a man goes when he lives in the desert alone. It isn't half as bad if he is cast away on an island, for there, ten to one, will be some animals or birds for companionship, and anyway there is the sea which is never exactly the same for two days at a time. But the changeless desert is quite different, and the man who can stand it for years without going mad or silly I think has yet to be built.

"So things kept going on from month to month. I got so at last that I had not energy to tell the boss when he came on his monthly round, that I wouldn't stay any longer. I think he knew how I felt, for he gave me a bottle of whisky, and told me to take a swig at any time when I felt extra queer. One day, about this time, when I went a little farther out than usual gathering grease-wood for my fire, I found the skeleton of a man under a big yucca. There is one peculiarity among many the cursed yucca has, which is, that it yields less shade for its size than any other vegetable that I have run across in my wanderings; and I saw at once that some poor fellow had crawled here hopelessly seeking a little shade from the murderous sun of the desert, and had laid himself down in

despair to die. The skeleton lay quite straight on its back, with the hands by its side, and the grinning skull, with the empty eye-holes, staring up at the fierce sun as if in defiance.

"In any other less God-forsaken country the bones would have been scattered about by the coyotes, but Mr. Coyote is too civilized to try to make a living in such a barren waste as the Mojave desert.

"I have seen dead men by the score on our bleak New England coast. Never a winter storm blows there but some poor schooner, or even square-rigged craft, comes to grief on that wild stretch of coast-line between Cape Sable and Cape Cod. We fishermen see death so often by drowning that we take it as a matter of course, and have no horror of it at all. We know there is not much pain in that way of going, indeed there is no pain at all, as I have proved, having been what you may call drowned twice, and never felt a twinge of anything disagreeable until my mates were getting me back to life. Then in a wreck you have the comfort of companionship, which is a mighty thing to help a man in a tight place, on sea or land. But this poor solitary soul had gone in loneliness, and in the long agony of thirst, as

was shown by no bottle or tin flask being near. The sun will burn away clothes into dust before long, but it can't burn away glass or tin. These white bones made me feel as I had never felt before in the presence of the dead. In a wreck on the coast they come ashore in twos and threes, and I have seen more than a dozen men, women, and children, all lying near each other; some naked, some with bits of rags on, and some half covered by the tangle, as if the sea was ashamed of what it had done, and was trying to hide its cruel work.

"Such scenes are too pitiful to express in words; but, as I say, there is not much horror in them to men who are accustomed to the sea, like myself.

"But this man had died forgotten, or if not forgotten, at least his fate was utterly unknown to all those who had loved him at some time or other. In a wreck the ship is reported, as a rule, and if it happens on any sort of a civilized coast, the dead have decent burial, which always counts for something. But those who loved, or knew these bones when they were a man, never heard where or how he passed in his checks at last.

"So every day I got to thinking more and

more of the lonely figure out on the desert, until I had a fixed idea that my end would be the same, and the sooner the better. In the moonlight nights it became a regular habit with me to go over and sit by the white bones, and lay my hand on the smooth skull, and talk aloud as if the ears that had grown deaf in a long-past agony could hear a human voice they had longed in vain to hear when dying. I used to sit hour after hour in this way, until the moon sank westward, and the shadows of the ghostly stems of the yucca would make narrow streaks of black across the white ribs and backbone, in such strange shapes that I could fancy the bones were moving. Then the blood-red dawn would begin to show in the East, which was the signal for me to wish my friend good morning, and start off to my duties on the line.

* * * * * *

"In this way another year or so went past. My only companion was my friend out on the desert, for the overseer or any of the hands who came along found no pleasure in talking to a man like me, whom they looked upon as sullen and ill-natured; which was indeed a pretty true estimate of my character at that time. I did not once go into the Needles during all that

miserable year. Somehow, I had got it into my mind that no more letters would come from Mary, and as for the wages due to me it did not seem of much account whether I ever got them or not. Sometimes it came into my mind to stop a train with a danger signal, tell the conductor that I was mad, and that he had better let me ride quietly to Los Angeles or I would kill somebody. But a great feeling of loneliness would creep over me whenever I thought of leaving my friend on the desert. Moreover, a fixed idea took firm hold of my mind at this time that it was my fate to die at my post, and that my bones would be left to bleach beside the only friend I had now in the world."

Here Jacob paused, leaned his head on his hand and looked away over the green landscape and the beautiful blue sea, with a sort of gasp, as if he were slaking a dreadful thirst with a cool draught of nectar. Then he calmly resumed: "Of course I was then insane. The life of loneliness had produced its usual result, and I was mad. The strange thing about such a state is that no one suspects madness until the madman does something dreadful. The overseer gave me my instructions, and asked me questions

about the line, got my list for such things as I required to be sent out, and never seemed to notice any sign of the disease that was eating my heart and brain; or if he did notice it he very criminally left me to my fate. I know now that if I saw any poor chap in the same way as I then was I would take him away from whatever fix he was in, if I had to tie him hand and foot and carry him on my back.

"At last the climax came as it does in all such cases. I made up my mind very clearly and quickly at last. I decided to lay the burden of life down beside my only friend under the yucca tree. I was several days making my arrangements, although any one would have thought that I had not much to arrange. First I wrote a letter to Mary, telling her that I was tired of this place, and that I was moving off to what I was told was a better climate for disease of the *heart* with which I had been troubled of late. I then said that as I had plenty of money in hand for all the expenses I expected to incur in the new country, especially as I intended to stay with a *dear old friend*, I had left all my salary in the hands of the manager of the railroad company, with instructions to pay the money to her when she presented my order

at the office in Boston. I also added a small joke, as I thought it would put her mind more at ease about me—'That I hoped she was getting along finely, and that she had two or three big boys by this time, and that her husband would soon be a member of Congress.'"

I felt sure that Mary would punch Jacob at this part of his history, but glancing her way I saw that she had turned away, and by a slow motion of the shoulders, I knew she was silently weeping. "After I had done that job," continued Jacob, "I wrote a clear letter to the agent at the Needles, asking him to send all my money to the office in Boston, making it payable to the order of Mrs. Mary ——, who was before marriage Miss Mary Price. You see I had firmly made up my mind that Mary was married. That was part and parcel of the disease induced by the horrible monotony of the desert, and known in some parts as 'prairie jiggers.' I then turned my attention to my shanty. I had always been a careful man, and took pleasure in arranging and keeping all my little belongings in good order. I cleaned and arranged the company's tools, so that my successor would find everything ship-shape. I cleared out my trunk, and burned many little scraps which were too pri-

vate, or too sacred, as some folks would say, to leave for careless hands to chuck about. The hardest bit I had to do was to burn a packet of letters which I had kissed and put under my pillow every night for more than two years. I thought at one time of putting the packet under my head when I lay down for the last time, but the cursed way that paper has of lying about, never decaying, and telling things to everybody which were only intended for one, made me determine to make white ashes of the poor little, frayed, soiled bundle. But it was the stiffest contract I ever had to carry out, and it took me fully three days to wind up the job.

"At last I finished my arrangements to my complete satisfaction, and I finally determined to see the eastbound train pass safely, then to take my revolver and join my friend under the yucca. It was a blazing hot day, I remember, and instead of seeking the shade of my shanty as any reasonable man would have done, and as I usually did for a few hours in the middle of the hot July days, I stood on the embankment waiting for the train to pass. I think I must have stood there for many hours—doing nothing, thinking nothing, only intently watching for the train. What I can remember of my

thoughts is that I had only a fixed, steady purpose to see the train pass, then good-bye to it all! I had no fear, I had no hope. I knew that my revolver would lay me to rest in a second of time. As for the hereafter, I had neither fear nor hope, only a sort of dull curiosity, such as I have sometimes felt in coming to a town in which I had no interest, and only wished to arrive at for the sake of a good sleep after long weary travel.

"How well I remember standing there! the hot haze brooding, like the breath of a furnace, over the desert. I can again make out the dim lines of what would elsewhere have been mountains, but here were only mounds of desert, more barren and ghastly than the dead level itself. How vividly comes back the utter, motionless silence, the hateful, overwhelming loneliness of it all. Oh, would the train never come! At last in the far, dim distance, a faint moving shadow; then a slightly darker cloud, and a few minutes later the dense black rolling smoke of the double engines, like the fires of hell dragging men to their doom. Nearer and nearer, until the fire-demons were at my feet; then with one infernal shriek, the carriages were sweeping past with no sign of life, the window

blinds close drawn to keep out the heat, and horror, and hatefulness of the desert. I had seen it all many a score of times, and took very little notice of it. But somehow, call it what you will—a presentiment, a spirit message, a prayer from her who was so far away, and who I thought had forgotten me (God forgive me for the sinful thought!)—somehow, I say, a fixed idea took possession of my mind that a message was coming to me by that train, and, my God, sir! so it did!

"In the last carriage but one, a window was open and a man was sitting beside the sweetest faced woman I ever saw. Yes, sir, just that, and I often have said the same thing to Mary here, and strange as it may seem to you, she has never contradicted me. They seemed to be watching for me, and as the train rushed past, the man threw a bundle of newspapers and magazines which, as I was within ten yards of the cars, landed almost at my feet. Then they waved their hands to me in a gracious, kindly way, that seemed to go straight into my heart, and made something crack; and as sure as my name is Jacob Busby, I picked up the papers, and sat down and cried like a baby, the very first time I had done such a thing since my

mother died. I don't know what it was. Papers had been chucked to me many a time, and I thought nothing of it. But there was something in this action that I had never seen before, or never felt before! I took the papers into the shanty and sat down, and presently I fell asleep, and never moved tack nor sheet until the whistle of the morning train woke me up, and I heard the boss calling me to take my things, and to be ready to meet him as he returned by the afternoon train from Barstow. After the things were hurriedly thrown out of the baggage car, and when the train was in motion, the boss swung himself on to the steps, and holding out two letters to me, said: 'Here are important letters for you which the agent told me to deliver carefully into your own hand; look out, grab!' and he shoved the two letters into my hand, and the next moment was gone. He never knew; not one soul on that crowded train ever knew; that one of those letters made a reasonable and happy man out of a fierce maniac. And did those kindly hearts, who greeted me the day before, know that their action saved a madman from a miserable lonely death, and gave him time to receive those letters which made two people happy in this life, with

a reasonable prospect of being happy in the life hereafter?

Mary's letter was like herself, true blue and to the point. She wrote that as I had not come to look for her, she was coming to look for me! and that she would arrive two days after her letter. The agent, good man that he was (he is dead now, killed in a stupid little poker game misunderstanding), wrote me a kind, sharp letter, telling me that he had not sent on my letter and money to the lady, as I had asked him to do. He said that a man would relieve me next day, and that as soon as I had handed over the station to the new-comer, I was to report myself to the office at once. When he read my letter he had diagnosed my trouble in a jiffy; he had had many years experience of men in the desert. So when I got to the Needles on the following day, he just looked hard at me for a minute or so, then shook hands, telling me that I must get ready in a day or two to start for my new station at Santa Barbara, where the Company wanted a man like me. I half guessed then, I know certainly now, that the kind-hearted agent made the transfer simply and solely to save a fellow creature from the pistol route, as

we say in the West. I told the agent that the young lady to whom I had directed him to send my money (which he had not done) would arrive at the Needles next day, to look for me, as I had been too stupid to look for her. At this the agent slapped me on the back, saying: 'That's all right! Just what you require, my man, some one to look after you—good! Whenever the young lady arrives you must be married and start for your new station at once, and may good luck attend you!'

"And good luck did attend us, sure enough. After two years more with the Company we had saved a tidy bit of money, so we bought this farm—ranch they call it out here—and I have no more to wish for, only to pray that the good God may keep me and mine in health and contentment."

SHIRLEY WOLD

SHIRLEY WOLD

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S STORY

I HEARD the little romance from the old housekeeper at the Hall, whose sister let rooms in Dartmouth. Mrs. East (the housekeeper) was then a wonderfully well-preserved, bright old woman of over seventy, I think, but she never acknowledged more than sixty-five. That was her age the first day I met her, as she carefully told me, and that was all she admitted the last day I saw the dear, bonnie old lady.

I was staying at Dartmouth for the late summer and autumn of 1897. Very much run down in body and mind, I wanted complete rest and change. I had come home after a good many years spent in the tropics, and had taken

up my abode in the quaint old town, in a rambling old house, which I had to approach by a long flight of almost perpendicular stone steps, as indeed one has to do in approaching almost all the houses in that lovable old town, which looks calmly down on the placid river, where many strange, stirring sights were enacted in the brave days of Drake, Hawkins, and many other heroes of beautiful Devon. Mrs. East used to come on most Saturdays and stay with her sister till Monday. She and I became quite well-acquainted, especially after I fell into the custom of taking her home in my boat, and so saving her a shilling in passage money, besides being a sympathetic listener to the old lady's quaint remarks on things in general, both past and present. I had hired a boat for the season, as I always do whenever I get to a place with a good harbour or river. I quite enjoyed taking the old body home, not only for the sake of the row, and as giving me a definite purpose (which is always a good thing in all exercises), but also for the great fund of information which she possessed regarding places and people for a radius of twenty miles around the Dart.

To reach Shirley Wold took me on an aver-

age over an hour, and two people can do a lot of talk in that time, especially if *one* is doing all the talking and the other all the listening, which was nearly always the case, as I liked the dear old lady's graphic little stories well, and she was not at all diffident about holding forth on all manner of subjects.

One morning she touched on the old days at the Hall, a thing she very seldom did. She was recalling the gay old times when she was a slip of a girl of fifteen or so, and the stately old dames at the Hall were only a few years her seniors. "Yes," she rambled on in her sweet, old Devon accent, "Ah, yes! everything was very different then. Lots of fine people came to the Hall in those days. The place was kept up in grand style. The old Earl liked to have everything in apple-pie order, and besides quite a large household of our own, there were always a many visitors coming and going. My lady had died when her two daughters were mere children. The Earl never married again. He got a sister to take the management of things and to look after the young ladies. Lady Park was her name, and when I grew old enough to understand things a bit, I am sorry to say that I hated her

as no creature should hate another, and I found that my young ladies (her nieces) had no love for her either.

"Lady Park was an old maid, and I have always noticed that there are two sorts of old maids, as indeed there are two sorts of everything. There is one sort who, after they get past the ramshackle stage of early life, seem to get an extra share of sugar into their nature; just like a fine mellow russet apple that has escaped those dratted boys, and hung an extra month on the tree, sheltered by a warm sunny wall. Then there is another sort that is as sour as a crab, and that was the sort of my Lady Park. She was always bullyragging somebody, morning, noon, and night. Not in a loud, angry way, like poor common folk do, not a bit like that, but in the quiet, polite, keen way that many gentlefolks have, which is ten times harder to bear than a real good blast of downright, honest, cursing and swearing. Of course, the Earl did not mind it a bit, as she could not annoy him. Besides, she was tall and very handsome, so looked well at the head of his table, and could talk like a printed book.

"The young ladies did not love her, as I have said, and took every chance to escape her

notice. In those old days it was more the fashion than it is now to have tutors for young ladies at home. So my ladies had a French tutor, an English tutor, a drawing-master, and a governess to teach the poor young things how to sit down and how to get up, as if the Lord didn't teach everybody that, unless they are born without legs. And so with it all they had enough to do, dear loves, and whenever they could escape they were off on some prank, either on their ponies, or in the boat on the river. There was nothing they couldn't do with a boat or a pony, and as Jack Evans—poor lad! —was their constant attendant as groom and boatman, it was supposed that they were quite safe. *Safe!* that 's how old heads are usually old fools, forgetting how it was with themselves when they were young and full of spirit and go, as my dear young ladies then were.

" Jack was at that time a little over twenty, tall and dark, with that kind of Spanish look which some in Devon have—a streak, they say, that has come from the sailors who escaped from the great Spanish fleet that good Drake and Hawkins sent to the bottom, and so saved us all from being Papists or burned at the stake. Jack lived at the lodge with his

mother, who was a widow and a very good woman, as women go, but, of course, mother-like, she thought Jack was one of the best lads that ever lived, and good enough he was, no doubt. But my experience is, that there never was a lad, or lass, for that matter, who could resist that look in another's eyes, when once their fate has overtaken them! And this is what happened to the poor young things. Of course, it did not all happen in a day or a month, or a year even, for that matter. No awful thing happens suddenly, excepting death, and that came after, as it always does.

"You have seen the ladies at the Hall, and can guess what a lovely creature Lady Mary was fifty years agone, and her sister was very like her. But I am telling Lady Mary's story to-day; maybe I will tell you Lady Ann's another day, if you don't get tired of an old woman's gabble.

"Well, the young ladies, with Jack and me, used to go tearing about the country like mad things, as soon as we got out of sight of other people, especially the young ladies' aunt. Ah, those beautiful days! The trouble in this world is that we never know when we are perfectly happy until the time is past and gone for

ever. I know now that there were not four happier young things than we were, between Devon's two seas.

"About this time a gentleman came to the Hall on a long visit. He was a sort of cousin to the young ladies, being the son of the Earl's half-sister, I think. Just how the relationship was I never exactly understood, but this I did understand most thoroughly, that I hated him from the first moment I saw his handsome face. He was a captain in the army, and had come home from India on sick leave. I wished then, in my wild, young, mad days, and I am sorry to say that I have wished something like it since, that handsome Captain Murray had been killed in battle or had died of his wounds before ever he saw Shirley Wold! But I suppose it was all to happen somehow, and if the Captain had not come some one else would, for sorrow and mishap are bound to overtake us sooner or later.

"The Earl had not seen the Captain for many years, not, in fact, since he had got his commission, a lad of eighteen or so, and gone off to India. Of course, he had changed very much in fifteen or sixteen years, and from an ill-set-up boy he had become a wonderfully

handsome man. He had the softest voice I ever heard, a voice of that sort which never goes beyond the person it is intended for, yet somehow, be it ever so low, is always distinctly heard by that person.

"The Captain soon fell into the habit of meeting my young ladies when their studies were over. At this time Lady Ann was nineteen and Lady Mary seventeen. It was hard to say which was best. Perhaps Lady Ann would have been called the handsomer, but that is not saying much, for they were just two of the prettiest, merriest, sweetest young things in Devon, or anywhere else, for that matter.

"It soon got to be a plan to try to avoid Captain Murray whenever we intended to start on a 'trek'—as old folks say in Devon and Scotland, and as those dratted Boers say, too. Lady Ann did not seem to mind him so much, but Lady Mary could not abide him; and, strange to say, it was always at Lady Mary's side that he fixed himself. I found it all out afterwards, but at that time I did not know why men will come where they are not wanted. But I was just fifteen, so only a big baby with regard to the ways of men. I have often thought that it would have been a mercy for us women if the

Lord had arranged things so that we began life at the other end with wise heads on our shoulders; so that when we grew young and the men came bothering about us, we would know a heap of things that girls never find out until it is too late.

"In this way the summer months slipped past, and the sweet autumn days came—the best time of all the year in our bonnie Devon lanes; when the hedges are loaded with blackberries and the hazels are ripe, and the woods are dry and warm, and the birds are singing with joy; for all the worry and care of nest-building and rearing their young is over, with nothing left to do but eat and sleep and make merry.

"That, I think, was the happiest autumn we four ever had, and—God save us all!—it was the last. Certainly the very last for the young ladies and Jack, and I may say for me, too. For, although I had many happy years with my man in after life, yet I never had the same careless, merry, frolicking days again. At the time I am telling you of, Jack Evans was a very handsome and well-mannered lad, and well-born, too, for that matter. His father had been paymaster on a man-o'-war, and had retired on a nice snug pension. He married below his station, as the

saying goes, that is, he married a ladies' maid—a pretty young thing, who was a deal too good for him, and just spoiled him with petting and letting him have too much of his own way. For you see, sir,"—here the dear old lady looked at me with an arch, quizzical expression which was altogether charming—"men require to be kept in check like children, or nine out of ten go wrong.

"So what with the idle easy shore life, and no one to keep him in order, Evans fell into bad company, took to playing cards and drinking whisky, and so led his young delicate wife a miserable life. At last he died when the boy was about ten, and left the mother and child without a white shilling, or a roof over their heads.

"Bessie Evans had been lady's maid to the Earl's wife, and so when he found out how hard up the poor woman was (the old Earl was always tender-hearted to women) he gave her the lodge gate, with ten shillings a week, and sent the boy to school. This went on till Jack was fifteen, then he was put on board one of the training brigs, and soon became a very clever seaman, or rather sea boy. After four or five years of this sort of life, the Earl arranged

with the naval people to have Jack live at the lodge with his mother, as she was getting too feeble to live quite alone, and only take his turn to go out with the brig for a few days once a month. The 'Sea-gull'—that was the name of Jack's craft—lay in Dartmouth as a tender to the Government training ship 'Victoria,' and her duty was to take the young cadets out for a day now and then, to teach them how to handle sails and ropes, and all the rest of it, on a ship really at sea.

"Jack's duties on shore were very light and pleasant. Not being exactly attached to the household in any fixed capacity, he was not obliged to wear the Earl's livery; and he mostly used to swagger around in his man-o'-war rig, and very neat and handsome he did look, more 's the pity.

"It gradually became a custom for my Lady Mary and her sister to finish as many lessons as possible on the days when Jack was at sea, so as to have him with them on all the many fine expeditions they had planned in the meantime, on the river and land.

"You see we were all mere children, in a manner. My young ladies and Jack were of course grown up, as the saying goes. But, sir,

as you know, young people only turned twenty are just as foolish as they were at half that age, and I may say a lot foolisher; for a danger is lurking in their hearts which was not there when they were only ten years old. But barring this danger they were as much children in their ways and feelings as I was, and I know now that I was then simply, as I said before, a big baby. However, the day of awakening was fast coming, and God help us! a sad day of the 'knowledge of good and evil' it was to us.

"I remember it all as if it had happened yesterday, instead of being fifty and more long years agone. It was just such a lovely day as this, and in this same month. The hedges were black with blaeberries, and the hazels were loaded with nuts. As you went along the hedge on the field side, whirr would go a pheasant, and a minute after his mate with a strong brood would sweep away after him with a merry clatter of wings and cries. I sometimes wonder why the merciful God does not give some sort of warning when dreadful things are going to happen. We learn, as we get along in life, to expect things to happen, but that is not what I mean. What I mean is this. Why does not the merciful Lord give us some warning of the storms of life

as He does of storms of wind and rain, so that we might flee to some sort of shelter, and not be taken unawares and hopelessly unprepared? I know what you will say, and what parson says. 'Always trust in the Lord, and He will shelter you from the storms of life.' I know all about that, and so do my ladies, thank God! and it helps *afterwards*. But I would like a warning ahead, like the lightning and thunder. I have heard lots of things said by the parson and others, but they don't help much. I heard Captain Murray say to the Earl that afternoon 'Coming events cast their shadows before.' But that is a black lie, as most things were lies which his cruel tongue said.

"On this particular Saturday my young ladies had planned to take our lunch with us, cross to the Shoreham side of the river, and each bring home a basket of blackberries. We landed just yonder, by the salmon weir, anchored our boat off shore a bit, with a line on shore to pull her in when we returned, and set off laughing and full of fun along the lovely lane that goes up the hill, pretty steep at first, then slopes towards the sea, and gives sweet views of the river and bonnie Shirley Wold.

"Ah! how well I remember that day, the

last day of perfectly careless happiness for any one of us, and how little any one of us dreamed it was the last! But that is usually the way in this sad world. The thunderbolt falls from a clear sky; death lays his resistless hand on our beloved, and in a moment they are gone! Or a few softly-whispered words are spoken, and our inexorable fate has taken hold of us; childhood, with all its joys is past for ever! we are launched upon unknown seas, where all the old well-known landmarks are obliterated; and there are only new, strange, dazzling lights to guide us, and we have to prove whether they be true beacons that will lead us into a safe haven, or only false will-o'-the-wisps that will lead us to disaster and shipwreck."

The old lady paused a bit after delivering herself of this piece of pessimistic philosophy, then furtively wiping away the tears which I had seen gathering in her sweet, soft eyes, she proceeded with her reminiscences, in a half apologetic sort of way: "There I go yammering away like an old fool with my notions, when all that you wanted was just to hear something about the folks in these parts. Well, now I shall go straight along and tell you what happened, and after all there is not much to tell.

"We four started up the lane, full of fun and frolic, you may be sure. Jack, of course, was always perfectly respectful; but he had a quiet way of smiling and doing things, that somehow always provoked fun and laughter; this made him welcome company anywhere and any time. Then he was exceedingly handsome and sweet tempered. The training on board of the brig-o'-war had improved naturally good manners, and given him a sort of dignified self-restraint which altogether made Jack a very wonderful young man to be in the position he then was.

"As I said, I was only a child between fourteen and fifteen, and having been held back I was even younger in my feelings than in years. Still, in spite of my childishness I must say that I had noticed some things about my Lady Mary and Jack, which although I no more thought improper than I thought it improper for the little boy and girl angels to take each other's hands and fly around our Lord as they do in a beautiful picture that is in our church, yet I knew very well that the little things I noticed were better not seen, and certainly never to be spoken about. I often wonder, as we all do after a great catastrophe, if it would have done any good had I gone to the Earl and confided to

him what I saw. Of course I never dreamed of doing anything of the sort then. I only sometimes wonder now when I see Lady Mary, old and sad, with the wistful look in her beautiful eyes, if it would have been better to speak; but that's the way we all go on in this weary world, always harking back to the past, and bemoaning something we have done, or left undone, instead of doing what is yet to be done in the best way we can.

"But I must get on and tell you of what happened on that lovely September day. You can see the lane from here as it winds away up by old Bill Saltcomb's cottage. Alack-a-day! Bill hath been dead this thirty year and more. His sons and daughters have been scattered to the four corners of the globe. Strangers who never heard of the Saltcombs now plough his fields, and sit at the old hearth-stone where we four young happy creatures used to gather, while dear old goody Saltcomb would regale us with new made pasties and clotted cream, fit for the blessed queen herself.

"We went far up the lane, almost to the road that takes you to Brixham. We gathered nuts and blackberries as we went along, intending to eat them with our lunch at the head of the

lane, under a certain oak that we knew well, and where there is a lovely peep of the river and Dartmouth. We did not get along very fast, as you may suppose; first on one side of the lane, then on the other, as we happened to see big nuts or berries. Of course we were often scattered, for as we came to openings in the hedges closed by hurdles we would scramble through and so get along on the field side, calling and laughing to each other. Once I crept ahead and hid at a sharp turn of the road, thinking to bounce out and give the others a fright when they came along, as merry children love to do. But, God be merciful to me a sinner! it was I who got the awful fright, as well as they—a fright that has lasted us all our days, and blasted three young lives.

"I had just snuggled myself under cover of the hedge when a hand grasped my arm like an iron vice. I gave one faint cry of terror and then sat perfectly still and half stupefied, for beside me stood the Earl and Captain Murray. They had been standing at this corner waiting for us to come up. I, in my hurry to hide, had never looked ahead, only backward towards the others, while the Earl and Captain Murray being close to the hedge, and keeping quite still,

I had not noticed them. How they got there I don't know. Of course it was all a scheme of Captain Murray, because he was in love with my Lady Mary; and with a lover's sharp eyes he saw more than any one else, and so wished to ruin Jack and have the coast clear for himself. But it didn't do him much good for all his cleverness and wickedness, and hateful handsome face.

"Neither of them spoke after the Earl had said to me, 'Keep perfectly still, Bessie.' And perfectly still I did keep, you may be sure, kneeling on the grass and shaking like a leaf, for I knew in some awful way that a dreadful thing was going to happen.

"I soon heard the others coming. Lady Ann was in the field on the other side of the hedge, and as she came slowly along she was singing an old song that we all knew. Oh, how well I remember the refrain of that song, although I have not heard it for over fifty years! None of us ever sang again, until we had forgotten the way. But I never forgot the words. The refrain was:

'Oh, the ship it sailed away,
An' as she watch'd it gae,
Her sair heart brak in twa,
For her sailor!'

I heard them coming nearer and nearer. Lady Ann was close to us, but on the other side of the hedge, as I said. Then she stopped singing, and calling 'Where have you all got to?' she blew a call on a whistle that she carried on her watch chain, and Lady Mary answered, 'Coming! coming!' At that moment she and Jack came in sight hand-in-hand; and at something she said, laughing and swinging her basket, he suddenly drew her towards him, and (God help me! the pang comes again to my heart) he gave her a quick kiss on her beautiful mouth. I do not know if that was the first, but —dear God—I know it was the last.

"Of course, the spying had been planned beforehand by the Captain. He had reported some things which he had noticed, and the Earl had demanded proof before he would believe any such things of his daughter. Oh, the blindness of human beings! as if you could play with fire and gunpowder as children play at the chucks. So Captain Murray had planned it all. May his soul pay for it in purgatory if he does not repent!

"The Earl would never have thought out such a plan himself; he was too lazy, and too absorbed in his books ever to have noticed any-

thing out of the way. But the Captain was in love with Lady Mary—or pretended to be—I don't think such men ever are in love! What's the sense of talking of love if the other is not in love with you! Bosh!" Here the old lady stamped her foot in such a determined way that it made the boat quiver again. Then she said: "Here we are at Shirley Wold, and many kindly thanks, sir, for the beautiful row you have given me. If you care to hear more of an old body's rigmarole of what happened when she was a slip of a lass more than fifty years agone, I will tell you the rest of it the next time you have a spare hour. Good day, sir, and thank you kindly. I see that the tide has turned by the way the boats are swinging to their anchors down stream, and as the wind has changed you will be able to sail back to Dartmouth."

I rowed into the Shirley Wold landing, while the old lady gathered up her numerous packages, stepped lightly out of the boat, and with a final "Good day, sir!" went like a girl up the steep pathway which led to the Hall. But that is the way with the old folk in Devon; they start well in that lovely healthy land, and they keep it up, if they live to be a hundred.

* * * * *

A week or so after this I had the pleasure of again taking Mrs. East up the river in my boat; and I asked the old lady kindly to finish the story of the ladies of bonnie Shirley Wold. Without any preliminary she at once took up the threads of her little romance with great good will.

"The Earl dropped my arm with a terrible oath, then turned to Captain Murray, his face as white as my apron, and said, 'Well, sir, you have won, and you shall have her, if you care to run the risk. Evans!' he called to Jack, in a hard strange voice not a bit like his own, 'I wish you to take this important letter to Captain le Roy of the brig "Sea-gull," which sails this afternoon for a cruise. I wished to send you with it this morning, but I could not find you about the Hall, and as Captain Murray told me that my ladies had taken you and Bessie over the river on a blackberrying expedition, I thought I would find you all up the lane somewhere.' Then he continued—looking into poor Lady Mary's basket—'Well! you have made a very poor day of it, Mary! why your basket is not half full.' Jack had come forward, cap in hand, to take the letter. My Lady Mary never moved, but stood with her proud beautiful

head thrown back, looking straight into her father's eyes, and never taking the least notice of Captain Murray.

"The Earl handed the letter to Jack, saying, 'Now then, be as quick as you can. Go up the lane to the main road, run all the way down to Greenway ferry, then hire a boat with two men and tell them that I will give them ten shillings each if they reach the brig before she gets out of the river. Remember that it is most important that this letter is given to Captain le Roy before he sails.' Jack took the letter, standing at attention, and only saying, 'I'll do my best, my lord,' he saluted, as sailors do; then putting down the basket which he had held while the Earl was speaking, he made a dash for the hedge at an opening where some rails had been put up to prevent sheep from scrambling over. He made a pretence of climbing over the fence, which I knew was done on purpose, for I had often seen him clear that very place at one bound; and the purpose was to give him a chance to wave his hand slightly to Lady Mary as he dropped on the other side. I am sure that neither the Earl nor Captain Murray saw the action, and the quick, slight response from my dear young lady.

"It was all over in a few minutes, and although I knew that a great trouble had happened, I little thought that it was only the beginning of sorrow which was to last all our lives, and that we had seen the gallant, gay young lad for the last time.

"All this while I had remained on my knees just as the Earl had forced me down when he grasped my arm and ordered me to be still. I was in mortal terror—poor young fool that I was!—but I had not then turned fifteen, so it was no wonder that I was frightened. The Earl had stood beside me all the while he was speaking, and that made it worse. For I had always been a bit scary of his Lordship ever since I was a wee child, when he gave me a shake and a clip because he found me pulling some rare flowers in a bed near the hall door. I know now that I deserved it, and no doubt a good deal more. Children are worse than hens in a flower garden, and this I say after having had ten of them myself, so I ought to know. Added to my usual half dread of the Earl, there was the horror of the present situation; he looked so white and changed, with a glitter in his eyes which I had never seen in any eyes *before*, but which I have seen

since in men's eyes when they were almost or quite mad. So I feared that he might turn on me, and with his great powerful hand knock the little remaining life out of my dizzy head. But he only gave me a shake, saying, 'Walk behind your mistresses,' as much as to infer that I had been in the habit of walking at their side, which indeed was quite true.

"'Come along, Mary,' he called, in a voice that he tried to make like his usual way of speaking, but which sounded strange and harsh, 'Come along, let us give up wandering for to-day. I am afraid that you have been doing too much lately. What with studies, and outdoor exercises, you look rather pale and tired. I think we must have a trip somewhere. London or Paris, which shall it be, *ma chère*?' My lady smiled rather wanly, but did not utter a word. She was the first to reach the gap in the hedge, and was over before Captain Murray could offer his hand. Lady Ann was still in the lane, and I think she must have had a word with Jack, for I saw her glance at her sister with a stern sort of look, before she spoke to her father and the Captain.

"Then we started down the lane, a very silent and uncomfortable party. Captain Mur-

ray tried to make some talk with Lady Mary, but she hardly answered him. The Earl asked Lady Ann a few questions about her studies—a subject neither of them was thinking about. Then they all seemed to conclude that talking was a failure, and we trudged on in perfect silence. When we got near the river I ran ahead and hauled in our boat; but as it was too small to carry all the party the Earl ordered one of the fisherman's large boats to take them over, while I jumped into ours to row it across. When the others got into their boat my Lady Mary came with me, saying that the other boat was too full. But I knew it was not that; I knew that she did not wish to be touching the Captain, as of course people do touch when three or four are sitting in the stern of a boat.

"We had not been home many hours when a policeman from Dartmouth came over the ferry to the Hall. He went in to speak to the Earl, and then it soon got whispered about in a mysterious way that some dreadful thing had happened. But it did not leak out until next morning what that dreadful thing was. Then it came out: first in whispers (as such things do), then openly and in plain talk. Jack had been found on the Greenway road, dead!

shot through the heart with a rifle bullet. He was taken to his mother's cottage, an inquest was held, and a verdict of murder was returned against some person or persons unknown. And unknown they have remained for more than fifty years; and, I suppose will remain, until the Day of Judgement!

"It was indeed a terrible mystery. Was it accident? or was it planned by *one* black cursed heart? Nobody was ever the wiser. But, you know, sir, that men who live for years in them heathen foreign parts do get accustomed to ways and things which we call crimes, but which they learn to look upon very lightly, more 's the pity and disgrace to men, say I, saving your presence, sir." I here mildly intimated that I myself had, unfortunately, lived for many years "in them heathen foreign parts," and yet I trusted that I had not utterly lost all sense of moral rectitude. To which she promptly replied: "Ah, sir, it 's not your sort that I mean."

"The Earl's letter was found in poor Jack's pocket, and, of course, was read at the inquest. My father, who was on the jury, told me that the letter was to Captain le Roy, asking him to keep Jack at sea on active service, as the lad was falling into bad ways on shore. Bad ways,

forsooth! a better lad never stepped in leather shoes. But such was the plan that the Earl and the Captain had made to get Jack out of the way, if the Earl was convinced of his guilt, as he called it.

"Many people said that it was no murder, only accident. Gentlemen were out shooting that day in the Greenway Woods, and at times it is rather dangerous for any one to get in the line of firing, as I have found myself. Once when Tom East was courting me, a stupid gentleman from London sent a charge of heavy shot into a tree just over our heads, which would have settled our story if it had only been a few feet lower down. But what made it doubly strange was that poor Jack had been killed by a bullet, and men do not use bullets for pheasants.

"Jack's mother died from the shock in a couple of days, and she and her son were buried on the same day. Lady Mary and her sister stayed in their rooms for a week or more, and when I next saw them they both looked ten years older! and older indeed they were, for never again did they have any of the old-time frolics or treks.

"Captain Murray only stayed until the in-

quest was over, and then took his hated self off. He was killed not long after by the Russians at the battle of the Alma, and I never yet said, 'God rest his soul!' and I never will." The old lady looked as fierce as such a sweet kind creature could look, when she said these words, while quietly wiping her eyes with her apron and composing her quivering lips.

"The Earl never seemed the same man again. Instead of being a kind, generous landlord, as he had always been, he became a harsh and stingy master; never stopping to chat with a farmer about the crops, or the weather, or the game, or things of that sort, which all landlords and farmers talk about. In fact, he would hardly notice or pass the time of day with his oldest tenants. My father had been on the estate, man and boy, all his life, and his father and grandfather before him, and he told me that he never saw a man change as his Lordship did. My father said that the grief and disgrace had broken his heart. It was a wonder it did not kill him. But sometimes the sorest wounds don't kill, and people live with broken hearts, just as they live with broken legs. In some strange way God makes them used to it, and if they are good people, they

grow better, but if they are bad, they grow worse. The Earl lived for more than thirty years after that time, and died calmly and peacefully in his bed, upwards of ninety years of age. I don't know to this day whether to think of him as bad or good, but I am thankful that I feel that sort of way about him, that I can say from my heart, 'God rest his soul!'

"As for the disgrace—as the Earl called it—to me, *then*, and to me, *now*, there was no disgrace in it at all! only there was more than enough of sorrow. If a bonnie sweet lass loves a handsome lad, what's the harm, I want to know? Difference of station, you will say. All stuff and nonsense! There was Tom Marsh, son of the Earl of Leascomb, who fell in love with a fisherman's daughter at Branscombe, as pretty a lass, and as good, as ever a man could find. Well! what happened? you ask. *This* happened because he was a brave lad, and because nobody killed him; Tom married the lass, bought a boat, and became a fisherman, and as the story-books say, though not always truly (but this is true, for I saw and heard it with my own eyes and ears, when I went with my man to visit his mother who lived in Branscombe), they lived happy ever after, and all in spite of

the raging of Tom's father, the Earl, and the silent scorn of his aristocratic mother. Mind you, sir, I do not advise all highborn young ladies to fall in love with sailor lads, nor all sons of noblemen to marry poor working maids, be they ever so pretty and good. Not at all. I think that people should marry in their own rank of life, as a rule, for that is the safest way, if everything else is right."

The old lady paused so long after these rather radical reflections, that I thought she intended to say no more; and, as she was evidently much affected by the vivid recalling of long-past sad recollections, I busied myself in setting the jib and trimming the sails to the wind, which came on the beam after we passed Greenway Ferry. Having made things shipshape, I again sat down, and took the tiller from Mrs. East, who had been steering while I was arranging the sails. She at once went on with her little story quite clearly, but in a subdued manner, as if the shadows of the long-past sorrow had again darkened her heart and saddened her voice.

"Those terrible days passed, and things at the Hall seemed to go on in the old way. Company came and went. Lady Park kept

everybody in order. My young ladies applied themselves to their studies very closely, and so the weeks and months went by. But a shadow had fallen upon the Hall which never lifted from that day to this. My young ladies changed from laughing, merry girls into staid, sedate, highbred ladies. No more pranks over the country, no more of the old, familiar, girlish ways which they used to have with me. All these things were over and gone, buried for ever in a dead past; but their ghosts came back sometimes, as I found out afterwards.

"My position at the Hall was a sort of knock-about-girl for the ladies, my duties being to go messages, feed the birds, or any odd job of that kind. But although the young ladies had a French maid (whom, I must say, I disliked most thoroughly), yet I was practically Lady Mary's maid. I always did up her room of a morning, and was out and in with her fifty times a day; for what with dogs, and birds, and kittens, and a dozen other things that girls take an interest in—be they rich or poor—there was always plenty to keep me busy from morning to night. So in this way Lady Mary and I were more like companions than mistress and servant. Lady Ann was, or rather tried to be, a little

more dignified than her sister, but they were both kind and sweet to me in those old days; indeed, they have been true friends to me since ever I can remember. God bless them!

"As I said, a shadow fell upon the Hall which seemed to touch and change everything and everybody. Lady Mary always treated me with perfect kindness, but the dear old familiar ways were gone. Only once in all these many, many years has she thrown off her reserve, and shown me the dead secret that lies in her heart.

"It happened in this way. I was married to Tom East, the gardener at the Hall, when I was twenty-two, just seven years after these sad events happened. When my first baby was born, Lady Mary came to see me. She talked a little while in her old kind way, and then telling the woman who took care of me to leave us alone, she took the child in her arms, and with a strange cry, she fell to weeping and sobbing as I never saw or heard the like of, before or since. After a while she calmed down a bit, and kissing my poor little dot of a babe she laid it back in my bosom, and kissing me with a hot wet face, went out without saying one word good or bad. But I knew well that the sight of the baby had brought into her heart, somehow,

the beautiful dead past, with all its sweet, sad memories. Such memories are hardly ever forgotten by women, until death, in God's mercy, comes; and perhaps they are not forgotten even then.

MARY DRIVER, THE BEAUTY OF BRANSCOMBE

MARY DRIVER, THE BEAUTY OF BRANSCOMBE

IT was a perfect autumn day in the month of September that in our wanderings we discovered the quaint, and most lovable little village of Branscombe. To tell the truth, we were quite ignorant of the existence of the dear old world place until we visited Sidmouth. Then in one of our many rambles about the country-side in a pony chaise, we found ourselves on this lovely autumn day entering the village by the narrow high-hedged lane that leads into it from the Sidmouth side.

I think that the month of September is the most charming time of all the year in that loveliest of England's counties—Devon. To use a little Irishism, if the weather is fine, it is

fine in that sweet month in dear old Devon! And then I think the landscape looks its best with the leaves turning yellow, and red, and purple, yet not falling in any such quantity as to make you sad with the sight of bare limbs, those ghosts of the dreary winter which is fast approaching. On that calm autumn day the lanes were yet fragrant with many a lingering wild rose and honeysuckle. The uplands were ablaze with heather-bells. The hedges were black with delicious brambles, and every now and then we came upon groups of happy children filling their baskets, pails, and hats with the tempting berries; and, oh! those children in the rural districts of the dear old land! No wonder Devon has been famed from of old for its strong brave men, and its fair true women, for they start well from their mothers' breasts.

And so we came into Branscombe, discovering new beauties at every turn of the road. Our way lay past the old parish church with its crumbling tower that was built while William the Conqueror was still ruling the land. Ah me! what gallant mail-clad knights, and fair, high-bred dames have worshipped here whose very existence has been forgotten, and whose bones have long since crumbled into dust!

So we came down the steep quaint street to the beach, whence the sea stretches away to the glowing West, a burnished expanse of living gold, dotted here and there with the brown sails of fishing boats. There are quite a number of fishing boats belonging to Branscombe, but, I am glad to say, not too many. I am always thankful when there are only enough boats in a pretty place to give life and picturesqueness without the noise and vulgarity, which, I am sorry to say, are too often found in large fishing villages. For miles north and south of Branscombe the cliffs are bold and almost unbroken by comb or stream. These cliffs are beautifully coloured in white, red, and yellow of many shades made by the dashing of the winter rains and streams beating on the chalk, and various clays and earths of which the cliffs are composed. Here and there along the top of the cliffs the ground has subsided several feet below the adjoining fields. These hollows and slopes are only a few yards in extent, but every foot has been utilized by these thrifty Devonians for raising early crops of potatoes and vegetables. These spots, although apparently more exposed than places further inland, are really several degrees warmer and produce

new potatoes a month earlier than the adjoining farms. But it always gave me a creepy feeling to see the men and women digging and planting their crops on the very edge of the sheer precipice as coolly as if it were an impossibility for a false step to dash them to instant destruction on the cruel rocks far below, an accident that has happened not infrequently at many places along the coast.

After spending an hour or two wandering about the beach and admiring the bold, wild coast line, I began to retrace my steps through the village. There was a little shop with one window in which were displayed some fine bits of Honiton lace. The little place looked clean and inviting, and so I thought here is a pleasant chance of having a chat with an ancient inhabitant. The door stood invitingly open—as all doors do in Devon—and I stepped in at once. A woman of about the allotted span of life was diligently sewing behind the counter, and rose with the nimbleness and agility of many fewer years. I had learned to know that Devon folk wear well, and carry their mental and physical vigour into extreme old age. It may be the climate, or their mode of life, but whatever the cause, the fact is visible all over the county.

There was an old ruin a little below the village which had interested me by its queer shape, and I thought that here was an opportunity to learn its story. "Oh, yes," said the old dame when I asked her, "that was Torland's mill! It was unroofed and the wheel broken to pieces in the great storm when the ship 'Queen of Devon' came ashore just fifty years agone come Christmas Eve. You see, sir, the mill was quite old, having come down from father to son for generations; and although it would have gone on well enough for many a day, barring accidents, yet when it was unroofed and the wheel broken, like other old things, sir," she continued, with a quiet little smile, "it had not any life left in it to recover, and so it went to ruin.

"When I was a child Torland's mill was one of the most beautiful places in all the country side. It had been a sort of Keep in the old fighting days, and the tower and drawbridge, all covered with ivy, and the old moss-grown wheel, going slowly round and making a kind of sweet sleepy music, and the old-fashioned flowers about the door, made Torland's mill one of the beautifullest spots in Branscombe.

"I often used to run over the place as a

girl. Rachel Torland was just my age, and we were great companions. So I was often at the mill, and knew every cranny and corner of the queer old place. I sometimes think that the mill is like myself. With all its attractions gone you would hardly think that the old heap of ruins had ever been beautiful, would you, sir? but it really was a lovely old place fifty years ago. And you would be less likely to think that in those old days the foolish lads called *me* 'the beauty of Branscombe.'" She said this without a trace of vanity or self-consciousness, and with an absent sort of air as if she were telling me something of interest about a distant relative.

"The poor Torlands moved away and I never heard of them no more; mayhap they went to some of those foreign parts that have such an attraction for some folk. But, thank the Lord! I never was took with such foolish notions. In this cottage I was born; I never slept out of it one night in all my life, and, please the loving God, in it I shall die when my time comes.

"I thought once that I was going to leave it fifty odd years agone, when my lad returned from his Indian voyage in his ship the 'Queen of Devon.' We had been keeping company for

a goodish while, and I was always urging him to give up the sea and take over the apple orchard and bit of meadow-land that his father held from the duke. A smart sweet place it was in those days, on the left-hand side of the road as you come into the village near the top of the hill, and it had been in the family from father to son for more than two hundred years.

"Jim—that was my lad's name, sir—Jim Cheere was a brave gay lad, and had always loved the sea more than the land; but at last he promised, for my sake, to knock off roving after one more voyage in which he expected to visit a part of the world he had never seen before, and to make a nice little sum of money to set us up in life for a start. It was arranged that his mother should look after the place (his father being dead and gone) until Jim returned and we were married, and then took all care off the old lady's shoulders. He was to be away two years, and so he was to a day!

"You see, sir, in those days people did not hurry as they do now. All the great foreign-going ships carried sails, and beautiful they looked, like white clouds on the ocean, instead of dirty smoky iron-factories, as the great black steamers look now. So they did not make such

quick voyages in those days. Six months out, a year getting a cargo together, and six months home was the rule in the days when the Queen began to reign, God bless her! And speaking of the Queen, sir, puts me in mind that I was one of twenty young women who made the lace for her marriage gown, and sinful proud we were of the same, and were the envy and the talk of all the girls and women in Devon. But I beg your pardon, sir, I started to tell you about Jim and the good ship 'Queen of Devon,' and here I am chattering away about the Queen of England and my own silly self! Well, sir, Jim started on Christmas day, which I thought was hard; but he had to join his ship at Plymouth two days after, and in those days there were no railways as there are now, so poor people had to foot it, with the chance of a lift in a cart now and then. We had one letter from Jim a year after he left, written at a place in the Indies called Calcutta. He found a ship sailing as he arrived, and he wrote me a sailor's letter, full of fun and frolic and high spirits, and saying he would be home on Christmas just two years after he left us, and he kept his word. Ah, yes! he kept his word as he always did to me!

"You see, sir, it happened in this way. The good ship and brave men made a fine voyage, and had worked hard to make port and have a happy meeting with sweethearts and wives on that Christmas eve. The Lord knows best, of course, but it did seem cruel and strange that all our beloved ones should be cast up by the savage sea, cold and dead, on the very day we expected them back strong and well. They had rounded the Land's End in the hardest gale that had blown on the coast for many a year. They tried to make Plymouth, but it was so thick and black with the awful fog and rain, and the raging wind and sea that it was impossible to make out any landmarks, and so they kept to sea as well as they could. But the wind blew right on the coast, until, with most of her sails blown away, and her spars and rigging a mass of tangle and ruin, the 'Queen of Devon' was caught between Beer Head and the Otter, and no ship ever got clear of our coast in such a gale.

"In the afternoon word reached the village that a ship was fighting for life off Branscombe Mouth, near the ten fathoms line. The life-guardsmen had seen her as the fog lifted a bit, but they could do nothing in face of such wind

and sea. Every strong man and woman in the village (forgetting their own troubles that day) fought their way to the shore against the wild wind, that struck you fiercely as if it were a mad living thing, to see if they could give any help to those who had come so far to meet their doom.

"You see, sir, Devon and Cornwall folk are always ready to do all they can for sailor men. There is not a house, great or small, in the two counties but has, or has had, a lad on the sea. And whenever the wind moans at night half the women are thinking of some one steering a ship through a lather of foam, or clinging aloft to a slippery yard with a wet sail lashing his face."

Here the old woman's lips quivered, and after a vain effort to control her feelings, she fairly broke down; and putting her apron to her eyes, and laying her head on the counter, she eased her poor old heart with the blessed relief of tears and low gentle sobbing. I busied myself turning over the pretty bits of lace, but I did not see their delicate patterns. Instead of the lace I saw a gray December morning, the cruel sea still roaring on the beach although the wild wind had ceased. I saw the wreck of a noble ship, battered and broken out of all semblance of her former symmetry and beauty.

And I saw, ah, Lord! why should such things be? groups of men and women here and there tenderly laying, beyond the reach of the savage waves, the still, white, helpless forms that were gallant strong men yester-eve. And I also saw a young girl and an old woman, not weeping and wailing (that comes later, thank God), the girl holding the comely head of a drowned sailor in her lap, and smoothing back the wet hair from the cold white face. She said never a word; for when the heart is breaking the lips are silent. The old woman was kneeling, and with low words of endearment, such as she would use to a child, she was arranging her red peasant cloak decently around the silent form. Mother and sweetheart of fifty years ago! So I saw them in my mind's eye, when the *then* young sweetheart, and the *now* old woman, recovered herself, and with a tearful smile said "I must beg your pardon, sir, but I do be so foolish when I get talking over those old times."

Perhaps it was a cruel thing to keep harping away on the tragic story, but the romance and sorrow of her life had taken such a hold of my imagination that I could not for the life of me get away from the subject. "Were there any saved from the wreck?" I asked. "Not one!

nothing with life could reach the shore through the wild sea that night. We never had such a storm in Branscombe before or since. Half the cottages were unroofed, and most of our apple-trees were torn up by the roots. All the orchards had to be replanted, and it was a weary ten years before we had a cask of cider to sell. Then the roofs had to be re-thatched, walls to be built, and it was many a day before Branscombe folk were comfortable again, or even above bare poverty. If it had not been for the lace and the fishing I don't know how we could have kept soul and body together. The lord of the manor gave the men several new boats, and the ladies of Devon, and even the ladies in far-off London gave us heaps of orders for lace; and one way and another—with God's help—we managed to pull through that hard time.

"As soon as the owners of the 'Queen of Devon' heard of the wreck, they came up from Plymouth to see if anything could be done. But, ah, sir! the sea had done its work so cruel well that there was nothing left for man to do, except to lay the poor lads in the old churchyard yonder, with a bit stone at the head of such as had friends well enough off to do it. His mother and I worked and scraped for three years and

got together enough to put a stone over our lad. But it was one of the cheap kind that crumbles away with the years—like the rest of us. You can hardly read his name now, but bless you, sir, I can go and lay my hand upon it in the darkest night, without once making a mistake, and," she added, while a sweet smile overspread the beautiful old face, "I shall be laid there before long, and, thank the dear Lord! I shall sleep with my lad at last, at last! after all the long, weary years. Oh, yes, I used to repine a bit long ago, but not now! not now! as I see clearly all His mercies. When I think that my lad might never have come back to me at all, that we might have been far apart all these fifty years, instead of being so near that I can skip up to his grave in the gloaming and talk to him a bit. And to think that at last I might have had to sleep in a lonesome grave! Ah, yes, sir, the Lord is very kind to the poor as well as to the rich, if we will only believe it."

I never saw a calmer or sweeter face than hers as she said these words, and I could well understand how this withered old woman was called "the beauty of Branscombe," fifty years ago.

She had now completely recovered her com-

posure, and with the greatest cheerfulness and activity showed me her little store of the far-famed Honiton lace. I lingered long over the selection of the pretty things as souvenirs of my visit, pretending to be very much concerned in the choice of patterns, and in getting her to explain the various designs and the value of each. But the fact was I lingered for the reason that I felt it was good for me to be near this patient, beautiful soul; and whenever I think of her to this day, and of her great love and faith, I am for the moment a better and a humbler man. However "time and tide wait for no man," and at last I had to think of the miles that lay between me and Sidmouth. I made the old lady quite happy by spending a ten pound note, then with something very like tears in my voice, I took a loving farewell of "the beauty of Branscombe."

TANEKAI AND MAHINA

TANEKAI AND MAHINA

A FOLK-LORE STORY OF THE PACIFIC

MY dear boy Philip, you are ten years of age to-day, and ever since you were seven I have told you a little story on your birthday eve. I know that you remember the story I told you last, because you said this morning that you always remembered the sad stories better than the funny ones. In saying this, you showed a kind heart, which pleased me very much, for I would rather that you had a kind, loving heart, than that you should become the greatest soldier, or the most famous statesman, or the richest man in the whole world.

"You know, my dear boy, how I always impress upon your mind what a great and high privilege it is that your birthday falls on the

same day as that of our blessed Lord. And while you and I sit here by our bright fire on this winter night, and I tell you a little legend of a far-away beautiful land, just to celebrate your birthday, we can also think that nineteen hundred years ago a little babe lay in a manger in Bethlehem, Who came to save the whole world from sin, and sorrow, and all pain. This dear Lord is especially fond of children, and knows exactly how they feel, all about their joys and sorrows, because he was once a little child Himself.

"I told you a year ago about poor little Ben. You remember how he was run over by a cab in the Strand while he was sweeping his portion of the street, diligent lad that he was; and how I took him to the hospital, and how he lay in his bed for two long years, and then died and went into the heavenly land, where he will never suffer or weep any more. You remember how he stretched out his poor little withered hands when he was dying and cried: 'Oh! I see Jesus and the angels! they are coming! they are coming!'

"Now put another log on the fire, and put out the candles, for I can see the lights and shadows of what I am going to tell you about better

when there is no other light in the room except the fire. There! that will do nicely, come and sit down beside me and do not interrupt, or I may lose the thin thread of my little story. After I have finished, you can ask any questions you wish, and I will answer to the best of my ability.

"There is an island far, far away, under a lovely sky, where it is always summer, and where, long ago, the simple people of that land were always happy. In that clime, flowers and fruit grow in the rich soil very differently from what they do in our cold climate. Those happy people had only to plant the seed, and like magic a crop was assured. Then the beautiful forests were full of the most lovely and delicious wild flowers and fruits. The warm sea teemed with fish of many kinds, which were not only excellent for food, but were lovely creatures with colours like the most brilliant butterflies you ever saw.

"This land was ruled over by a wise and good monarch, who settled all disputes among his subjects, apportioned their lands, saw to it that each man, woman, and child did their fair share of labour for their own and the general good, and that high and low had equal opportunities

of happiness, and equal shares of what you boys call 'fair play.'

"This monarch was descended from a long line of kings, who, though they did not possess what we call learning (a term which I am sorry to say often means the knowledge of how to get the better of our neighbours) yet they had a very good understanding of all that was necessary to make their subjects contented and happy.

"As I told you, in that once happy island there is no winter like ours. But there are seasons of certain winds, with rains, and dews, and times of perfect calms when different kinds of work and recreations are suitable. For instance, in the still hot days of what we may call late summer and autumn, the King, and such of his people as were young or middle-aged, would go into the forests in the beautiful mountains, for various purposes of work and amusement, although I need hardly use these two words, for to the King and his people, work and amusement really meant the same thing. The people would cut down tall straight trees and make beautiful canoes which they took down to the shore for going on their fishing expeditions far out to sea, and for sailing on the rivers. Wonderfully beautiful rivers these were,

with the banks all overhung with the most graceful palms, and vines bearing blossoms of various colours, which swayed and swung in the soft wind, and dipped their gorgeous petals in the cool water.

"Then there were the bird hunters. They were very clever men, who could snare hundreds of a certain kind of beautiful bird in a day—small lovely creatures about the size of a lark, with beautiful, glossy black plumage. The only colour about these little 'angels of the earth' (as one of the ancient poets called the birds) was a tuft of bright yellow feathers beneath each wing. These feathers were used in a most ingenious way for making mantles, which shone and glittered in the sun like polished gold. You must not think that the hunters killed the birds to obtain the few bright feathers which each bird possessed. Oh, no! not at all; that would have been cruel, and wasteful, and these two things the King's people never were.

"The hunters proceeded in this way. After they had selected a suitable place in the forest for their purpose, they made a sort of bower with branches for themselves to hide in; then all around on the trees they put the milky juice of the bread-fruit tree, and also of other plants

which are quite sticky, so much so, that when the little birds lit, they were held fast, and could not fly away until the hunter came and released them, which he did at once, at the same time securing the few yellow feathers. The whole operation caused the little bird no more pain or inconvenience than if I suddenly pulled a single hair from your head, and you know how often boys do that in mere sport. Then the bird was released, and flew away, no doubt feeling very thankful that the hunter only took a few feathers, which would grow again in a year, and did not take its sweet, joyful life, as most so-called civilized people do when they get a chance.

"In this way, and in many similar occupations the King and his people passed their happy days and weeks in the cool, lovely forests. For instance, they made all their agricultural implements of wood, for there was no iron found in that happy land to induce men to dig great unsightly mines in the earth, and then to blacken and disfigure the beautiful landscape with great smoky furnaces, kept day and night in a horrible state of conflagration and noise by weary, wretched-looking men and women, who, with blackened faces and sad fierce eyes, hardly seem to be human beings. All this miserable toil

simply to obtain metal from the earth, mostly for the purpose of making great ships and guns, and other implements of war, so that men when they become mad with the lust of power (the most cursed lust which has afflicted mankind in all ages) may have the cruel means of sweeping their fellow creatures from the earth in a wholesale and expeditious manner.

"Sometimes in the evening, when the work and the amusements of the day were over, the King would call for the historians and learned men to rehearse some wonderful legend of the long past times, when his ancestors first came to this happy island. The people would gather about the great camp-fire, which they always made at night in the mountains, more for cheerfulness than warmth in that delicious climate, and which lit up the great trees and made changing lights and shadows in the deep recesses of the forest. Here is a story I heard on one of these occasions, for I lived among those happy people for several years, knowing and loving them well, and being loved in return.

"Said the historian: 'Listen, O King! and ye people! while I tell you a story of the beginning of the old, old time, when the moon and the stars were nearer to our land, when the

flowers were larger and brighter, and their perfume sweeter, and the whole world fairer than it is now. There were few people in the world in those days. On our island there was only one man; his name was Tanekai, "Man of the sea." He was young, strong, and beautiful as when the morning sun flashes his glory over the east, and all the colours of the great high God are cast over the land, and sky, and sea.

"'Tanekai lived on our land quite alone as regarded human companionship. But he was by no means lonely, for the birds were his friends, and in those happy days he understood their language, and they understood his. And so the years went swiftly by.

"'A hundred years! two hundred years! but they brought no age or weakness, or sorrow to Tanekai. For his mother was the white sea foam, and his father the rainbow in heaven, and you know, O King! that the son always inherits the qualities of his parents good or bad, and of course we all know that the sea and the rainbow never change. Thus the happy years slid past, and Tanekai did not know that joy and sorrow, meeting and parting, were on the way to find him, even in this happy land, where they had never been before.

"'In those olden days, the moon, as I said, was much nearer the earth than it is now, and when it was at the full, the beautiful creatures there (who had very clear vision because they had never done evil) could see this world quite clearly but, of course, they were too far off to converse with people here. And so it came to pass that the daughter of the King and Queen of the moon, as she gathered flowers by the great waterfall (which any one can see on very clear nights), chanced to look at our island and saw Tanekai as he played with his mother on the sea-shore. Alas! for the beautiful daughter of the moon; the fate which overtakes all mortals and immortals alike came to her. Her heart was touched by the passion of love, and all rest was gone, and all interest, and all thoughts centred on the beloved one.

"'She was the most exquisite creature that had ever been created. When her maidens combed out her hair it swept all around her to the ground like a garment. Her eyes shone like stars on a clear night. Her voice was like the song of birds at the day-dawn, or like the music of the falling waters of Hataua when exquisitely modulated by the soft sweeping of the summer wind. But, alas! all the brightness and joy

went out of Mahina's life when the overwhelming passion came to her, as she knew for certain that she could never reach her beloved one on this earth save upon the one terrible condition of becoming mortal. For this is an inexorable law which is never changed, that if beings choose to descend from a higher to a lower sphere, they must become subject to the terrible penalty of death, and pass through the valley of the dark shadow, ere they can again get back to their high estate; and alas! many never do find their former glorious life, but wander for ever in the dismal abodes of night.

"'All this Mahina, as an immortal of the highest estate, knew, for she had been instructed by the greatest and wisest teachers, as was befitting that the daughter of an immortal King should be. And so the weary days passed for Mahina. Her maidens noticed the change, and spoke of it to her father and mother. But they said it was only a maiden's wayward thoughts, and foolishly, as we mortals also do, hoped her mood would change as time went past. But her mood did *not* change! it only became more fixed and determined, until at last she told her father and mother that she had made up her

mind to assume mortality for the love she bore Tanekai. Of course her parents were very deeply grieved, and did all in their power to change her foolish resolve, for they could not but think it a foolish fancy, when they lived in such a beautiful world as the moon, and had all things that even an immortal could desire. But this I have heard, O King! and I think it must be true, that Love is greater than all other things, greater even than Death!

"'And so Mahina prepared to leave her native land and come to our island. She bade her father and mother a loving farewell. They were not so very sorrowful as we might suppose, because great sorrow cannot exist in the abodes of the blessed, and also because the King and Queen, being immortals, knew that the parting would only be temporary, for after her mortal life they knew she must return to her birth-land. Another thing to assuage their sorrow was the strange fact that the immortals have no sense of time as we have. The very longest life that a mortal can live on this earth is to them merely as a summer day or night is to us. Of course they knew, also, that their daughter must pass through the valley of death ere she came to them again. But the immortals, who have never

seen death, and who have no terror of that great mystery such as mortals have, think of it only as we might think of passing for a moment through a darkened room.

"'Mahina had her maidens drape her in a pink cloud, such as we see in the early dawn when the sun begins to rise from the sea. Her hair was bound with a wreath of immortal flowers, and on her forehead she wore one star, which was the star of her destiny, a star that all immortals have, so long as they remain immortals.

"'And thus in the glorious beauty of an immortal, without regret, without misgiving, for *love*, O King! hath the mystic power to make immortals and mortals alike forget all else! Mahina descended to earth on the glittering moonbeams, softly, slowly, as we sometimes see a feather floating to the ground in the forest when there is never a breath of wind to disturb its course.

"'There is a cave on our south coast, where you, O King! used to bathe when you were a boy. Your mother first showed it to you when she was a beautiful, happy young mother. You remember that to enter that wonderful cave, the swimmer has to dive and pass a long

archway under water, and so enters the cave and lands on its snow-white coral sand.

"'It is still the most beautiful grotto in all this beautiful land; but in the old, old days when your ancestress, O King! the beautiful Mahina came, that cavern was like the abode of the gods for all loveliness and delight. Sparkling on the roof were magic stones, which filled the cave with wonderful and various coloured lights. What became of these stones our wise men cannot tell; perhaps they are there still, and it is we who have lost the pure sight without which mortal eyes cannot see them.

"'When Mahina came to this cave, clothed in a rose-cloud, and with the heavenly star on her forehead, she was the most beautiful creature that had ever appeared on this earth. And so lightly resting on the soft coral sand, as a sea-gull's white feather rests, and with the magic stones illuminating the cave with their wondrous colours, she sang this song to Tanekai, which he heard quite distinctly, for immortals hear just the same whether they are near or far:

1.

Fair are the flowers on the crest of the moon,
Touched with the glory that cannot decay:
Sweet are the dreams that we dream in a swoon
As we sleep on the flowers at the close of the day

But fairer, a thousand times fairer to me,
Is the Son of the white-foam, the Son of the Sea!

2.

I have left all I loved in the fair land of Light—
The hearts that are mine and too steadfast to change:
I have passed through the regions of death in my flight,
The regions where evil and sorrow still range:
But light is the pain and the terror to me,
For the love that I bear for the Son of the Sea!

3.

Your beautiful mother is fairer than snow,
Your father has cast o'er the heavens a spell,
That even the gods in their blessedness know
Has a charm that their wonderful lips cannot tell—
But love casts a spell so high and so deep,
That it holds us for ever, awake or asleep!

4.

Then come, my beloved—oh, come to my heart,
Oh, whisper the words that shall banish the fear
Which I heard in the valley, "Ye meet but to part"—
Oh, whisper, beloved, I only shall hear!
O Son of the Sea-foam! for ever be mine!
For in spite of dark death—I am thine!—I am thine!

"'These two, O King! were our ancestors in the old, old days. They lived for many, many happy years on our island, and had many children. But at last Mahina grew old and weak, the sad fate of all who assume mortal bodies, even though the soul remains immortal.

She parted sadly and lingeringly from Tanekai, in the same magic cave where they first met, and went back to her father and mother in the beautiful moon. They met her with a kiss and a smiling welcome, as if she had only been wandering in the golden forests of their wonderful land for a summer afternoon, making wreaths of immortal flowers with her maidens. Of course when Mahina left our earth her mortal nature was at once changed, and she again became the same lovely immortal maiden she was ere her sojourn on our island.

"'Tanekai mourned long and deeply for his lost love. He knew where she had gone, as Mahina had told him all about her home and father and mother; also explaining that some sad day they must be parted by death, a penalty all creatures who live on our earth must sooner or later endure. At length he gathered his people together—a vast assembly, yet all his own descendants, some of them looking old and feeble, while Tanekai was still in the prime of his manhood—and he told them sadly but firmly that he must leave them for many, many long years, but that in the far future he would return and bring them good tidings.

"'The people wept very much and begged

him not to leave them, but he only smiled and kissed them, and went on preparing his magic canoe that was to carry him beyond the portals of our world, and into the regions of the blessed, where he would meet her he had lost, his one true love!

"'This, O King! was the origin of our race. It was many, many ages ago. Tanekai has not returned yet, but some day he *will* return and *bring good tidings* as he promised. There are some who say that we must fall into dire misfortune before he will come to help us. But what evil can befall a people so happily situated as we are in our beautiful island, and with our wise, good ruler, O King!'

"Thus ended the old historian's legend. And in this sort of way those people passed their lives, and very happy and peaceful lives they were in the old time, ere the evil days came.

* * * * *

"And now I must tell you another chapter of the history of my friends in that once fair island. I say *once* advisedly, because although the shape of the land is approximately the same, yet the softness and beauty of the landscape is gone for ever. The glorious forests, with masses of wild flowers, are no more to be

found. The songs of the birds at daydawn, like bells and lutes, are silenced for ever; and in place of the old, free, happy life, men are toiling with weary hopeless souls, and smoke-begrimed faces, longing for the end to come and free them from their hard taskmasters.

"But I must go back a little in this sad part of my story, and make it as brief as possible, or my dear boy will not sleep to-night for thinking sad thoughts.

"It is a long time ago—not, of course, in the old, old days—but a long time ago as we reckon our lives, that many great canoes came to the land of Tanekai. The people had never seen such canoes. Indeed, they were so large that they cried out, 'These are not canoes! they are "moku,"'—that is, *islands* in their language—and so a large vessel is still called 'moku' till this day.

"In those great canoes came a strange and fierce people. They were not so very fierce when they first came, as they were comparatively few in number; and the King and his people could have slain them with the greatest ease, which they doubtless would have done had they known all the misery which this invasion was to entail on them and their children.

"Yet these strange invaders came with the *avowed purpose* of doing the King and his people good! What more good they required it is rather hard to imagine. They enjoyed health, and an abundance of the material things which mankind usually desire, and labour all their lives to attain. True, these happy islanders had never heard of Mr. Darwin, or Oliver Cromwell, or John Knox, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or even the Pilgrim Fathers and George Washington with his little axe! etc., etc. Still in spite of these great deprivations, they lived their lives happily, contentedly, and just as usefully in their own humble sphere as these wonderfully wise newcomers, who professed to shape their lives so faithfully after the pattern of the excellent men, a few of whose names I have mentioned.

"But it was written in the book of destiny, I suppose, that the strangers were to come and change utterly the old simple life and introduce, with a few things that were undoubtedly good, a great many things that were still more undoubtedly *bad*; the root and branch and fruit of which things may be summed up in the one word *selfishness*. And the saddest part of it was that all was done in the name of *love* and

improvement. But that is one of the strange ways of this contradictory world; men often call *good*, evil, and evil, *good*! A great philosopher says most truly, 'In many parts of the earth appropriated by us, the native races are being *improved* out of existence.'

"The King and his people received the strange newcomers kindly and hospitably. Not only so, but as they seemed to be a weak and very sad people, the King took great compassion on them, and ordered nice comfortable houses to be built for their use, and supplied them with all such things as reasonable men and women require to make them happy.

"But alas! for the ingratitude which distinguishes humanity. When the newcomers became strong and powerful (which they soon did in that fair country, and under the King's generous care), they persuaded him to grant them certain privileges, with the object of some day getting the government into their own hands. Finally they told the simple-minded King that if he would intrust the law-making power to them, he would save himself a vast amount of trouble and worry, and place his country in line with the 'Greatest Nation on Earth,' and, at the same time, make his people

supremely happy as well as *free*! (The freedom afterwards proved to be the right of mortgaging their lands, and spending the proceeds on very bad rum!)

"The poor King, who was much touched by the prospect of getting his country in line with the 'Greatest Nation on Earth,' and making his people 'supremely happy,' at once adopted the newcomers' advice, and thus inaugurated (although most unintentionally) a system that was the beginning of the end of himself and his nation.

"The result of it all was that the poor islander grew restless and unhappy under the unaccustomed *régime*. He neglected his old healthful pursuits, and altogether became a changed and very miserable creature. His fine, old-fashioned, industrious habits and sturdy honesty were wrecked on the quicksands of a system which was utterly unsuited to his physical as well as mental capacity.

"At last the final catastrophe took place. The invaders rose upon the King and dethroned him, and took possession of the whole land, and fashioned it after their own ideas; with the result that the miserable, poverty-stricken islanders have to toil all day long in the hot

tropical sun, instead of wandering with their happy companions in the cool, beautiful forests, as in the vanished days of peace and plenty. Thus, with tear-dimmed eyes and heavy hearts, they whisper to each other (they dare not say it aloud, or they would be thrust into dungeons) 'Oh Tanekai! is it not time to return with the "Good tidings" to your miserable children!'

"Now, my dear boy, good night! As a last word, I wish to say, that when you think over my story (which I hope you will do) you must never forget that the simple, pure Gospel of our Lord *always* brings good comfort with perfect peace. And I bow reverently at the graves of *those few* men and women who spent their lives humbly, unselfishly, and nobly serving their Master in that far-away island. They were not the ones who brought sorrow to the fair land of Tanekai.

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